United States Foreign Assistance Oral History Program

Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection

An Interview with

Robert S. Zigler

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Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
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ASSOCIATION FOR DIPLOMATIC STUDIES AND TRAINING
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, a non-profit, tax-exempt organization, was established in 1986 to enhance the training of foreign affairs personnel and to instill in the public a greater appreciation for our diplomatic history.

The Association's Foreign Affairs Oral History Program was established in 1988 and is housed in the Lauinger Library of Georgetown University and at the Foreign Service Institute in Arlington, VA. The collection is comprised of oral histories taken from a number of projects, with the unifying factor that all concern the conduct of American foreign affairs and experiences of those employed in the field of diplomacy and consular affairs and their families.

The oral history collection includes interviews done under the auspices of the Foreign Service History Center of George Washington University, which was amalgamated into the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program, the Foreign Service Family Project, the Women Ambassadors' Project, the United States Information Agency Alumni Association Project, the Foreign Assistance (AID) Oral History Project, the Senior Officers' Project, the Labor Diplomacy Oral History Project and others.

The aim of the US Foreign Assistance Oral History Program, in particular, is to develop a collection of oral histories of those who have served USAID and predecessor agencies and those who have served in foreign assistance programs of associated organizations such as private firms, private voluntary organizations, and other US government agencies. The Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE) of the USAID has made a grant to help finance the preparation of 120 oral histories.

For the most part these interviews are carried out by retired USAID personnel on a volunteer basis, directed by the Oral History Program. The interviews are unclassified, and unless so marked are available for use by researchers. Most of these interviews have been transcribed and then returned to the person interviewed for editing. The transcript is an edited version, and is not a word for word rendition of the cassette tape. The editing usually consists of correcting of names and dates that have been missed during an interview. The individual interviewed may also choose to expand upon topics that may not have been developed in the time allotted for the interview.

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An interview with
Robert S. Zigler

Interviewed by W. Haven North
Initial interview date: November 5, 1998

Q: Today is November 5, 1998, and this interview is with Robert S. Zigler. Bob, why don't you start off by giving us a summation of your career in foreign assistance, and then we'll go back to an earlier period.

ZIGLER: Well, I'll say in preface that I was involved in non-profit organizations after World War II and then eventually moved into AID. So my employment with AID began in 1964 in Laos. I put in a tour there. I came back for a year to work on training of local employees and then went to Vietnam for about seven years, from '68 to '75. Then back to Washington for about four years from about '75 -'79, where I worked in training and orientation then in the training office. Then to Ghana from '79-81. Back for a year and then on to Upper Volta from '83 to '85. At that point, I hit the magic 65 and came back to Washington, DC.

Q: That's great. Let's go back to a bit about where you were born, where you grew up, your education, and in that anything that suggested why you became interested in international development and international affairs.

Early years and education

ZIGLER: Sure. I was born in Elgin, Illinois, about 30 miles out of Chicago, April 15, 1920. Elgin at that time was the watchmakers' town, the famous watch. It was a stable town that had a good school system with emphasis on the arts, sports, all that kind of thing. My father was an administrator in a religious denomination named the Church of the Brethren. As a result of his professional activities, I think I had rather an unusual experience for a boy in Elgin, Illinois. For example, his work caused him to travel all over the United States to visit different congregations. It had to do with ministerial placements and problems in the congregation, and so I received postcards from all over. He also traveled, and in the summer we, from time to time, would get in the car and drive. By the time I was 18, which was 1938, I had been to both coasts and down to Florida and into Canada. Depression times being what they were, it was kind of unusual tourism for a family. Another experience I remember, we had five college presidents for dinner. They sat at the table. What they said is irrelevant right now; we are talking about contact with the outside world.

Q: These are presidents from the United States?

ZIGLER: Yes. The denomination was known as the Church of the Brethren, and these were church related schools, obviously. Then we had the World's Fairs of 1933 and 1938. So all of them were influences about the outside world. Then, of course, I went on to college, which was Manchester College. Manchester College had a faculty member named A. W. Cordier. You may have heard of him. He was in the United Nations. He had a global outlook, and everybody took his European history course. He brought an awareness about the world. Then there was another man who broke out of that middle western Indiana system called Kermit Eby. He went to Chicago and was instrumental in setting up the Chicago teachers union and then switched over to the University of Chicago without even a graduate degree. He was in labor education, so, for example, there are many people still alive who took courses under Kermit Eby. He would come back from time to time and talk about associations with other people. We were, at Manchester at that time, a bunch of farm kids, and small town kids. He was talking about people in Michigan who worked in the factories and the mines, so that was another world.

Then I had an interesting cross cultural experience. For me it was really the first one. Near Elgin there was a place called Dunham Woods. It was a site that was used by an entrepreneur who brought Percheron horses from France to Illinois. He had barns there to hold the horses and kind of a hotel for the buyers who came from Iowa, Michigan, Indiana, and Minnesota. This was back in the 1800s and early 1900s. They would buy Percheron horses and take them back to their area for breeding and livestock development. Anyway, I and a couple of friends wanted a summer job. We went out to see if we could work there during college. The manager said, “Sure, we need some people next Saturday for a dinner.” Here we were, young idealistic college guys, which made us, perhaps, appealing waiters. So, we went into the building that Saturday. He said, “We've got four rooms, you go in this one, you go in that one. All of the rooms were at different levels. The reason was, they had been added on through the passage of time. The members didn’t worry. They just went up or down a couple of steps. This Dunham Woods, at that time, was no longer a horse place; it was a high priced country club for the Chicago rich people. Here I was astounded that all these rich people couldn't have a building with all the floors on the same level. Then in one room the glasses were blue and another one they were green and another one they were yellow, and I was astounded at that. After the soup course, a man raised his hand and said, “Could you get me another bowl of soup? These were long tables of people dressed well for the evening. I was astounded that he had the audacity to ask for another bowl of soup. I went and got it for him, for me I would say that was my real first cross cultural experience.

You may know that the Church of the Brethren was a pietist church which, of course, meant that pacifism was important. So, I was a conscientious objector in WWII. I worked in forests for awhile and then in a veterans mental hospital. Obviously, I began to develop a concern for doing something of consequential value because I recognized that the men who went in the service were; so when my time was to come, I should, too. So the work I moved into after WWII was with voluntary organizations. The first one was the Brethren Service Committee which was developed to attend to relief and rehabilitation.

Work with the Brethren Service Committee - 1945

Q: World wide or just in the US?

ZIGLER: The first regional concerns were Europe and then China. You may remember the collection of food and clothes. The Brethren Service Committee was involved in that and opened a center out in New Windsor, Maryland that you may have visited. Anyway, I started out there in what was known as the "sea going cowboy" program. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation agency, UNRRA, became involved in shipping livestock to Europe to replace animals killed in the war. Most were horses and mules. Whenever the Heifer Project, which I'll describe in a minute, could collect enough bred heifers, they would find a ship and load them up. Livestock caretakers were needed. During the course of two or three years, we recruited about 4,000 men to take trips to Europe as caretakers of horses, heifers, and mules. They would feed and water them during the sea voyage.

Q: Part of the delivery?

ZIGLER: Yes. When the caretakers got to Europe (We are talking about '44 to '47, an unusual time to get to Europe for anyone.), sometimes they would be there for one day; sometimes they'd be there for a week depending on how the ship was scheduled. So, they would get a chance to go ashore. These people came back with their cameras and stories. They were really quite busy lecturing and reporting on what they saw. These were people from all over the nation - schoolteachers, ministers, veterans, farmers, conscientious objectors - of all ages.

Q: Did you take any trips?

ZIGLER: No, I was the administrator who selected them. In those days, we had an application form with name, address, references, and a doctor's certificate. I must confess that compared to modern day personnel concepts, it wasn't very complete, but it seemed to work partly because you had people who wanted to go. The trips lasted about six weeks, three across and two or three back. They were paid $150 as I remember.

This had significance for other relief organizations. The man who was the head of the Mennonite Central Committee, Orie Miller, said the returned Mennonite cowboys made the MCC program succeed because when they came back, they talked to their neighbors or their brothers or sisters or members of their congregation about what they saw. For those people, that was a believable presentation. The idea to contribute for assistance for the world was believed and accepted. Anyway I did that, then I switched over to the Heifer Project for a short time.

Joined the Heifer Project - 1946

Heifer Project was a program to which people gave a female bovine that had been bred and was pregnant. Once she was bred, she was called a closed heifer. When she has her calf, she becomes a cow. These were first calf heifers so they would have a longer life span upon delivery. The idea was to send them to farmers who were in Europe at that time. The countries I can remember were Poland,

Czechoslovakia, Italy, a few into Belgium, a few into France and later on into Germany. The thing that made it so appealing was an American farmer could raise a heifer and give it to the program. Church groups and individuals also would buy an animal through Heifer Project. Europe was an area that actually had recipients who would write back to the donors, so you had interesting communications. Even later, these farmers who would say, "Mama, the boys can take care of the farm; let's go to Europe. Let's go and see our heifer." By now she is a cow and has had two or three calves. So, you had this incredible reunion between the man who raised her and the man who used her.

Q: What was the beginning of the Heifer Project? How did that get started? Was that connected to your other program?

ZIGLER: It was an intermingling involvement of people in different committees and organizations. There was a man named Dan West who was a Church of the Brethren schoolteacher from Indiana who went to Spain in the Spanish Civil War time. He worked for the American Friends Service Committee there. One of their tasks was to mix up dried milk and pass it out to mothers who had babies who needed milk. After awhile the lines got so long they had to make what you might call life determining decisions as to which baby got the milk. Here you have men who were out there with compassion and idealism having to look at a baby and say we are not going to give you any. That was kind of tough going. Anyway, West, a farmer, said, "Why don't we send them some cows?" Anyway, what happened the war began, WWII. At a meeting in northern Indiana, West was reporting on his Spanish experience. Someone stood up and said, "I'll give a heifer calf if somebody will raise her." Another said, "I'll raise her." So that was the first one. As a result of that impetus, there were about 17 or 18 that were all committed for shipment. Then when they were bred and ready to be shipped, you know you can't stop the movement of pregnancy, where to go? WWII had come on and transportation across the Atlantic was impossible, so that first herd went down to Puerto Rico. James R. Watson, who was an administrator for the American government there, was involved in that. That is where the first distribution was made, so that is where this first so-called herd of Heifer Project cattle went. The first three were obviously named Faith, Hope, and Charity. I would say there were a number named this afterwards. Anyway, that was the beginning. HPI was dormant during the war and then picked up after the war when UNRRA shut down and we had no shipping. We had some heifers with no place to go, we decided to sell them off and stand still for awhile. So, I went up to New York and worked for Church World Service which was a Protestant arm of the relief endeavors. They were in cooperation with the Joint Distribution Committee and Catholic Relief Services. There were a number of warehouses where contributed clothing and food was sent for processing, bailing, and shipping. I was involved in that for awhile.

Worked with Church World Service - 1946

Q: What was your job?

ZIGLER: Well, it was administrative. I would go over the progress reports, personnel, financial reports, shipment directions, that kind of thing. My area was west USA so that included San Francisco, Seattle, St. Louis, and Los Angeles. I would do the standard administrative actions that

would be appropriate for that. It was a good thing because it got me up to New York City which was a great experience to be there from 1948-1951. That was a great time for any young man to be in New York City. Then I got off the track.

I wanted to become a city manager, so I resigned and planned to go to the University of Michigan in their Public Administration school. About a month before school opened, a fire in the library burned most of the books. That was a deterrent and I wouldn't start that semester. Here I was out of a job and I knocked around and did some odds and ends sorts of things in New York related to public relations, advertising, and commercial art.

Rejoined the Heifer Project - 1951

Then a man from Heifer Project said to me, "Why don't you come and work with us." I agreed and went back to New Windsor. To show you how things were in those days, here you have this organization that had only four staff members scattered across the nation, Los Angeles, Seattle, Indiana, and Maryland and secretaries. But here were volunteers of all kinds. Farmers who would let you use a pasture or a barn. People who would haul cattle. That is the way it was done to get to the ship or the airport. HPI only had $800 in the bank, believe it or not, when I joined! But it survived and as you know has had quite a successful career.

Q: You were arranging the shipments and contacting the people?

ZIGLER: Those days I did everything. I was the Eastern representative. I had associations with believe it or not, President Eisenhower, Harold Stassen, director of AID, ambassadors, people at the UN and so on. That was one end of the line. At the other end of the line, I actually loaded onto ships or airplanes livestock, chicks, or hatchling eggs. One day in the morning, I loaded some cattle that went to Angola. I had a bandage on my hand that got banged up from one of the horns of a bull. Then I had an afternoon session with the head of UNICEF. I even smelled of cattle. You can see how I could use that as a public relations gimmick, walking into a New York sophisticated office smelling like a barn. Also, I did public relations. HPI appeared in "Life," "American Magazine," the religious periodicals, the newspapers, and radio.

Q: How were the farmers selected overseas for receiving the cattle?

ZIGLER: Well, in Europe, there were local committees on hand, either church groups or government groups. You would send a herd of 40 animals over and then recipients were selected and the heifers were distributed by lot. That's the way it worked. (Now, there was another interesting aspect to this.) A living gift produces a calf. There has always been a principle in Heifer Project shipments that the recipient "passes on the gift." So, if the first calf was a female, when it was big enough to take care of itself, the recipient farmer would give it to somebody else. There were examples, by my time, where at least five heifer generations had been donated without organizational involvement. The people accepted their responsibility, you might say, to "pass it on." So it was quite an appealing program.

Q: Were there issues of breeds and conditions that were not perfect for those types of cattle?

ZIGLER: We had two issues. Number one, the competency of the recipient, and as far as I knew these were always experienced farmers. In Germany they were called the Volksdeutsch. You may remember the Potsdam agreement required that all the people from the different ethnic groups should return to their homelands. The Germans had to come out of Estonia or Latvia or Poland or wherever. They were farmers and what to do with them. So they were resettled into West Germany. Now it is true that in Europe, breeds weren't really too important. It was a family farm type concept there, so there would be bulls that would be available so cross breeding for a milk cow wasn't too much of a problem. Your question is reasonable, no question about it, but it didn't apply. As you know, most milking cattle came out of Europe anyway, the original breeds.

Q: But the environmental situation was probably not like in developing countries.

ZIGLER: True, Europe was an active agricultural area with experienced and, at least, minimally educated farmers. Anyway, I worked for Heifer Project for about nine years. I traveled all over the world.

Q: Where did you travel the most?

ZIGLER: I had never been out of the country. I traveled mostly on shipments. This would include India, Haiti, Ecuador, Greece, Turkey, and the first trip was to Afghanistan, all by airplane! This was when Heifer Project was involved in development in association with other organizations such as the AID predecessor, the UN or host countries. So, this was a shipment of cattle that went to an AID project in Afghanistan. In southern Afghanistan, you may remember, there was a big development program.

Q: The Helman valley?

ZIGLER: That's right. There was a need for some Brown Swiss cattle and some Columbia sheep. Now the Brown Swiss as a breed were agile as far as their foot work was concerned so they would make better oxen. Of course, they could milk almost as good as a Holstein. They were bigger so they could be bred with the local animals and you could produce an improved offspring through cross breeding. The crossbreds also carried with them some of the disease resistance capabilities of the local cattle. That was the purpose. So I went, believe it or not, on that trip. So I start off in Afghanistan. Returning, I went down to Pakistan and over to Jordan, down to Egypt, up to Lebanon, then over to Geneva and then on in. For a first trip, that wasn't really too bad. As I remember, we are talking about the audacity of youth. Of course, by that time, I was 30, but then you have your travelers checks. You come into a town and you find a hotel and you go on your way and survive. But, also I was able to visit a number of places, one of which was Iran where we had already made some shipments of Brown Swiss cattle in cooperation with the AID predecessor, TCA I think it was.

Q: How do you get the cattle to Afghanistan?

ZIGLER: In an airplane. We had 18 head of cattle and 12 of sheep, different ages of the cattle. This was intentional partly because you wanted to get as many as you could in the plane, yet you wanted to have some that would soon mature. The soon to mature ones were bulls which could be bred with the local cattle sooner. We stopped in Rome and Damascus, then down to Karachi, then up to Quetta, Pakistan. There we unloaded them and put them into trucks and drove them across to Afghanistan.

Q: You had to care and feed them all the time.

ZIGLER: That's right. I went along as a caretaker. Now about differences in countries. We had import requirements from the Afghan government and those people had been trained at the veterinary school in Scotland. They came back with requirements for vaccinations and inoculations which weren't even used in the United States. Some of them were live vaccines. So at that time we had a problem getting these cattle ready because every one of them had an identification ear tag and other identifiers recorded on the health papers. They have the number and certification approved by the U.S. government. So here I am in this truck, and we are right on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. You wouldn't know where you were. There was no distinguishing border or anything like that in the area. These animals were loose, we just loaded them on. They were wandering around cattle and sheep. So I have to read the ear tags. As you may or may not know, cattle get all kinds of stuff on those ear tags which is related to the digestive process which you have to clean off. The typical way is to lick your thumb and scrub it off and then read. Of course, it was hot. I was sweaty and running around and the animals would move around and I had to keep track of those I read and those I hadn't read. After some frustration I looked up and here in the distance was a line of camels going across the border, and over here were a bunch of sheep going that way. All of a sudden three or four donkeys tinkled along. They didn't have any health papers!

What happened with me eventually was I got to the place where one of our board members said, "If you are going to stay in this business, you need experience overseas on site." So, at that time there was an organization known as International Voluntary Service. That was this organization that Dale Clark was involved in starting. IVS was looking for a man for Laos. They had a rural development team there. Once again I mentioned this interlocking association where everybody knew everybody. I knew they were looking for this person. I called up then Dr. Noffsinger, the director. He said, "Sure, I'll send you some papers and we'll start it out." I quit working for Heifer Project anticipating going, but I was out of work for one year before I went to Laos. This delay was due to the political and military situation in Laos.

Assignment in Laos with the International Voluntary Service (IVS) - 1961

Q: What year was this?

ZIGLER: That would have been 1961. This was the time of the Kennedy election. I was in the IVS/Washington office in the spring of '61. I went to Laos with IVS about April of '61. By this time then the Peace Corps bill had been passed. Then IVS began to receive delegations from the new Peace Corps, organizational teams. They would come out and see Dr. Noffsinger and ask, "What do you do about insurance?" That was the insurance group. Then another group would come out about

recruitment and another about travel. Of course he would give it to them. For the Peace Corps, it was important useful information based on experience.

Q: What was your job in the IVS?

ZIGLER: Well, in Laos I was the head of a group of about 26 Americans who in this time would be easily described as a Peace Corps type assignment. They were scattered all over the country and I was administrative head.

Q: What were they doing?

ZIGLER: They worked out in the countryside. They worked on agricultural construction, health, and educational projects. It was part of the rural development program that had to do with trying to stimulate activities in the rural regions by the rural people using resources provided by AID. That is a philosophical concept that AID had developed. I'll talk more about that when I get into AID. Nevertheless, they were action type persons who could use the resources AID provided.

Q: IVS was funded by AID.

ZIGLER: It was at that time. We were working under AID. In a sense we cooperated; we accepted cooperation where the Peace Corps tended to go their separate way. We were part of the country team. Another interesting thing about that, there were two IVS teams out there, another in the area of education. I counted about 17 people from that IVS Lao group that went on to work in AID. It was quite a supplier. I admit it was easier to get employed in AID in the 60's than it is now. You were there. AID knew who you were; saw how you functioned. It was easy for me then to kind of transfer over to AID once completing my IVS tour.

Q: What did you think of the impact of this work on rural development? Were there some political overtones to what they were trying to do there?

ZIGLER: Well, the American objective was to create, I believe, a neutralist country. It was supposed to be a tripartite kind of government, left and right and neutral. That was one of the reasons I wanted to go. From the point of view of historical involvement, there has never been a neutral government that was created. Switzerland kind of existed that way, but to create one had a lot of appeal to me.

So, what we tried to do then was to get the village people to make group democratic decisions, because of the stimulus that came from offering outside resources. That's what AID provided, opportunity for something different and practice then in democratic action in their community. That was the rural development side of things.

I would say there is another interesting point that should be mentioned. It has to do with IVS and the Peace Corps. Now what happened was, and we are backing up about 10 years, we are getting back into the 50's. Dale Clark got, with an AID predecessor, the idea that what America needs is more people out in the field rather than in the offices. Anyway that was his idea. He eventually got to the

Church of the Brethren and the Mennonites and they formed a corporation (IVS) which made it possible to contract with AID. The first team went to Iraq of all places. That was AID funded. There was another group down in Egypt that was quite successful.

Before that, backing up again, there was a movie actor named Don Murray. I don't know if you have ever heard of him. He was never too successful in his career in the movies. He was a volunteer in Europe with the Church of the Brethren to do relief and rehabilitation work. Now we are back into the 40's and the early 50's.

Anyway there was a political meeting in California. The candidate had not arrived yet. Senator Humphrey was, from what I gather, in the audience. The chairman of the meeting said, "Well, our candidate hasn't arrived yet, so let's get Don Murray to tell us about what he did in Europe as a volunteer." So, he told them about that. Humphrey heard it and was impressed. He heard about these two people in Egypt and in some way or another was able to check out on their performance. The Iraqi project came along and he was able to check out on that. On the basis of that, he did help create the Peace Corps Bill.

So anyway, one of the advantages of IVS was to go to places that a lot of people weren't willing to go to or agencies weren't willing to go to. So there were IVS teams in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam during that time. The Peace Corps wouldn't do that, of course, and that's understandable. So, IVS had that flexibility. So, there was kind of a reduction of IVS involvement then after the Vietnam War period. Then IVS went international with private funds. They tried to get a Peruvian to go to Ecuador, for example. They did do that for awhile. It still gets some AID money from time to time but it is just not as active as it used to be.

Q: The core of the program was rural development?

ZIGLER: Yes, and education. IVS has a team right now in Bangladesh. It has been there for a long time. IVS was there before the recent big flood, and is working right now on this.

Q: How were the volunteers received by the communities?

ZIGLER: Generally speaking, we are talking about the communities in the rural areas of the 40's and 50's and maybe the 60's, accepted a foreigner in a way that they may not do it in the 90's, because if you are from a foreign country and you are living there, that means that by implication you are of value. Your ideas are of value. You have to maintain and perform in a way that you don't lose your reputation, I admit. There was an acceptance, no question about it.

Q: Were these people technically trained and have particular skills?

ZIGLER: A lot of them originally they were farm boys. Now, remember a farm boy in the 50's was different. He came from a family farm. He could do a lot. He had a lot of skills and what else do you need, particularly for that level? You don't need to be an expert in agronomy or an expert in plant pathology when you are trying to find a way to feed chickens better.

I remember a project in Jordan. You may have heard of him, a guy named Musabey Alame. He was a Jordanian who set up a school close to the Dead Sea near Jericho for orphan boys. Anyway Jim Baile was out of Missouri. He went there and started an IVS poultry project to raise money for this boys school. They had to make their own feed; so part of it had to do with some nutrients that you can get out of blood. He would go down to the slaughter house where they killed the cattle every morning, and he'd get buckets of blood and mix it with the feed so that he had a balanced ration. That is an adaptation that wouldn't be very common at all in this country, but Jim knew enough to be able to pull it all together. It was an example of common sense knowledge and local utilization of skill.

Q: What do you think were some of the longer term impact of what you were doing? I'm sure they had a very significant impact while they were going on.

ZIGLER: Now we are talking about people. Today there are a number of people alive from these different countries that I can cite like Vietnam, Cambodia, or Laos that are either important in the World scene or important in their host country that got their start as a result of their association with IVS.

Q: Were they IVS employees too...?

ZIGLER: Like for instance with me, I'll give you an example. I was head of the IVS team in Laos. There was no local competency for the office people. I trained two or three office people, women, how to type, take shorthand, and office procedures. One of them came to this country and is still working in Montgomery County. Then we had a bunch of young Laotian men who were what we called field assistants. They were a combination of interpreters and aides to the American IVS person. They were colleagues you might say. They knew something about the culture and all that. But here once again, there was association with foreigners. A number of them I know of have either emigrated or stayed in their host country.

Q: So you are telling how the long term effect relates to people?

ZIGLER: Agreed. Now when it comes to agricultural technology, for IVS during its time, I don't think there was any great change. They did use the resources that would relate to building and gardening, etc.

Q: Well, let's move on. We can come back to some of those things. After your IVS experience, what happened?

Joined the USAID Rural Development Program in Laos - 1964

ZIGLER: Well, then you see, I was right across the street from the AID rural development office in Laos. I had a six month contract in the RD office as a program officer cleaning up documents and doing things like that. By that time I had also applied to AID as a regular employee. That was approved, so come March 1964 I was back out there as a regular AID employee.

Q: What was the situation in Laos at that time?

ZIGLER: Well, you still had this tripartite plan, but you also had fighting in the interior. That was a bad situation. That affected project performance in several ways. One is when it came to people particularly of the Montagnard types, they would get their upland, dryland rice, started and ready for harvest. Then they were frequently attacked by the enemy, which was composed of a variety of groups, and driven off. They had no rice crop for the next coming year for survival. That was one impact. Another impact had to do with the limitations on travel because of security, and there were a number of people that got killed in different ways. Some IVS people got killed, for example. We had the Air America pilots that were killed. They were pilots flying in uncertain areas. Believe it or not, at that time, there were certain routes that you could fly safely. If you would cut the corner, and a number of them would cut the corner to get home for a cocktail party or something, they'd get shot down. So, that was a kind of limitation on travel. Then, occupation of territory by the so-called enemy could be one that would prevent you from access to the people. So, those were limitations caused by the internal war in Laos which had limitations in involvement, of course, on the part of everybody.

Q: What was the general economic condition of the country?

ZIGLER: Well, at that time it was essentially self sufficient agriculture with the exception of some people that lived in the city. In the Mekong River valley area, that was paddy rice. You had one crop a year and that was about it. They would also fish and hunt for survival. As I remember the income was about $100 + a year in dollars at that time. Once again that doesn't mean you had a poor life, but you just had a limit in life. Something like we had during our Depression. We had what you might say was a limited life, but we didn't think it was a poor one; everybody was that way in the depression years, so that was the way it was there too. Some people called it a twelfth century civilization. We were trying to get Laos to the fifteenth.

Q: What was your position?

ZIGLER: I worked in the rural development division. I was a jack of all trades. I was originally brought out there with the title of "village leader development and also rural development staff personnel." It ended up most of the time I worked on the rural staff side. I didn't do much in the leadership. The rural staff was kind of a continuation of my IVS experience in terms of interpreting, translating, automobile driving. We had to teach the Laotians how to drive, for example. That was important because if both men couldn't drive on the team, well, you had a problem, particularly in a crisis. Basic automobile maintenance was taught. I also substituted as a field rep. I went to two or

three locations and spent two or three months out in the field because the Americans assigned to these different locations would go on annual leave. There was a man named Phil Gullion, who was head of the refugee department. That included the rice supply program which I'll describe in a minute and also food, clothing, medicine, and dispensaries and that kind of thing, personnel. I did that for a couple of months.

Q: What was the scale of this rural development program you were working on?

ZIGLER: Well, it covered the nation pretty much. As I remember, we must have had about 12 or 15 Americans out in the field. This had to do with the nature of the country and the general approach of the U.S. Government for aid worldwide. We had the second highest number of personnel in country. We were about 20th as far as budget was concerned. How can this be?

Well, in rural development when you go out to a village and ask the people, "What do you want to do? Do you want to build a bridge? Do you want to build a school? Do you want gardens? Those are three options." Then they have to decide what they want. I've described this before. We could provide the material, personnel, and supplies. You don't spend much money for 40 bags of cement, some nails, and roofing sheets for example. S, your budget would be disproportionally smaller than as far as your personnel was concerned. Of course, we had an agricultural team, an educational group, public health, public works.

We also had a social scientist out there, I believe he was an anthropologist. The idea was good, no question about that, but unfortunately , his demeanor was such that he didn't get accepted. He acted like a social scientist. Here you had a bunch of hard nosed we-can-do-it type guys, and they didn't react too positive to him. Unfortunately, he even had a kind of an explorers uniform he wore. Short pants, sox, hats like he was exploring Africa, that kind of thing. I really believe he would have been quite useful, but here you have the problem of human relations, which is what AID is all about, and he didn't come across too well.

Q: Was there any particular approach: we talk about human involvement and participation in things as though they were something new? What was your approach then?

ZIGLER: Well, to review, what would happen is an American AID man with his Lao counterpart would go to a village meeting and say we can supply to you materials of different kinds, technicians. If you want to build a bridge, if you want to build a school; if you want to build a dam; if you want to start gardens or something like that, we can help you do it. Now, you decide what you want. Then, you send your requests to the provincial governor. This has to do with nation building and government participation. So, they send it to the provincial governor. He reviewed it, and he sent it to the government in Vientiane, Laos, the rural development division. They review it and approve it. Then, there are warehouses supplied by AID under the administration of the Laotian government. The commodities were delivered by trucks, airplanes, boats. Here is a government that never did anything like that before, so you are trying to build a government at the same time you are trying to help the people in a remote village do something. Now, there were some interesting implications on that related to success. That had to do with the proper selection of projects.

I'll give you an interesting one in which there were Montagnard people up in the north who were moved out of a crisis situation down to what you might call a peaceful, secure province. So then they reestablished themselves in a new place. What are they supposed to do for a living? Now you see, you have a new entity in a society, in a community there of some size. One of the things I remember we did, we thought they could raise cabbages. All right, that was a great idea, have a garden to raise cabbages and sell to market. Well, two things, number one, that market as it was, was already functioning at a reasonable maximal level. That's where it was; it met the needs of the community as of that time. Number two is here you have people growing cabbages who are taking them down to the market, and there is already enough cabbage in the market. Then you have the issue of conflict and competition and price. Another interesting thing, and that is the cabbages they grew were too big. At that time as you know, people buy in the morning, and they cook it in the day, and they eat it the same day and start over the next day. There is no refrigeration, no carryover. These cabbages at that time were just too big. Eventually we tried to get them involved in making some cole slaw or something like sauerkraut. Then you had to have the jars! Interesting aspects about the problems of success.

In 1964, there was a big flood in the Mekong River Valley which you may remember is one of the major rivers of the world. There was an AID man up north about 4-500 miles. At that point we had radio communications. He would radio down the Mekong is rising. He was able to notify Vientiane that this flood was on the way, so actually they began to plan in advance. A number of people were assigned to be part of the American team, as well as anybody else who could volunteer to prepare for this flood that was going to arrive in a week. Nobody knew where the low spots were in the city of Vientiane at that time because at that time it had never been flooded. All kinds of plans were made, meetings and so on. I was the responsible man for my particular neighborhood. I was supposed to get a radio call and then I would go around and pick other Americans and haul them into the USAID compound. Well, I got a phone call one morning about two o'clock, and they said, “Get your people out there; the flood is on its way.” I said, “Why don't you use the radio?” For some reason or other, the radio didn't work, but the telephone system did! There you go. So, anyway, I went out and I picked up the Americans. The Laotians had to fend for themselves. I think it was about a 30,000 town at that time. There were trucks that had exhaust pipes that stuck way up in the air so they could drive through high water, things like that. We vaccinated the Laotians. I can remember people lining up in long lines. In those days, you just stuck a needle into some alcohol and wiped it off and jammed it into another arm for disease prevention related to flood water. The worst was cholera.

Q: A big threat?

ZIGLER: Yes, sure. The house I lived in was flooded up to about five or six feet. This, you see, was a real difficult problem for a lot of people because nobody knew who was going to get flooded and who wasn't. Another physical event that affects the performance of a development team. You have floods, earthquakes, fires, fallen bridges, etc.

Q: That's remarkable that you had an early warning system, unplanned I guess.

ZIGLER: Yes, but it worked. There are some other interesting things too about the business of achievement. even in those days, '64,'65,'66, Washington whatever that was, Washington represents AID headquarters as well as Congress, as well as the news media. Washington needed evidence of success. Here you go, how can you know what is successful? Also it had to be quantifiable; the big word. So, you could say you dropped so many of this and did this and did that, but that is not really a proof of success. Is Harvard University a success? Well, how do you prove it is? Anyway that was a problem we always had, trying to create projects that had some kind of an identifiable achievement that could be reported to justify the continuation of the program.

Related to that, the director of the rural development team at that time was Howard Thomas. He was a Ph.D. sociologist and had been a missionary in Thailand before W.W.II. He had met some Catholic missionaries who told him that their Bishop said when he sent them out, "I don't expect a conversion from you for 20 years." Now that was a realistic approach from the point of view of real change. You have different kinds of conversion I accept, but nevertheless, that was his admonition to them. Thomas was a faculty member out of Cornell.

Q: How did you see success in the work you were doing?

ZIGLER: Well, I suppose when you have taught somebody how to write shorthand or how to fix a car, is that success? I have always had this opinion and it started then is you have “got to try.” You have to make the effort; you've got to be a believer. It's like some ways a soldier in combat; he believes in the effort, but he doesn't know whether or not he is going to be successful. Then, as you know, peace is a questionable term too. So what are you really doing? But, you're trying.

That to me was somewhat of an acceptable situation. You remember, part of my objective was to try to make the world better. Part of my philosophy too had been it related to when you have a career opportunity to make a change. If it is still in your philosophy, take it, a new one, automatically. It is like going out in the Mississippi River starting in Minneapolis. As long as you are in the river, you are getting to New Orleans. You might go to this side or that side, but go with the flow. That was a kind of a quality that I accepted myself.

Q: Did you have to do a lot of reporting? What kind of statistics did you gather on measuring success or accomplishments or so on?

ZIGLER: Usually it had to do with “numbers” of events or items. For instance, we went to Ban Hui Sai and talked to the leaders there, and decided they would build a school etc. So, they built a school, so that is an achievement. Or 2,000 bags of rice were dropped. This doesn’t show what the value was of the learning or the nutritional impact of the rice.

Q: So it was nothing but the impact?

ZIGLER: I would like to mention a little bit about the support of the Montagnards in northern Laos. Now, as you know, Laos was essentially divided into two groups of people, the Laotians and the mountain people minorities. There was one minority that was composed of 17 people. They were

called the yellow banana leaf people. They would build their houses out of banana leaves. It was a primordial concept. When the leaves turned yellow, they would move to another place for protection.

There were other people in northern Laos that what we call now the Hmong. A number of them as you may know have come to the United States as refugees. They fought on what you might call the free world side. I mentioned their rice fields being attacked before harvesting, so here they were moved to a new site which was hopefully militarily protected, but they needed food. So there were air drops of rice. These Air America planes flew over the sites and pushed out the bags. The bags of rice were double bagged. Air drops started out with one bag and when they would hit, they would break all over the place so they doubled or tripled the bags. The general idea as I remember, the planes came in at 200 feet at 100 miles an hour. That was the right combination of height and speed. It would keep the plane in the air, and then you would push the bags out the door at the site. The people would see them come down. Of course, they didn't want to get hit by one. Then they would go out and pick up the bags.

To show you how loose things were in those days, a number of times on a Sunday afternoon I'd go out to the airport and find a plane that was getting ready to go and ask about going along. I would go on board and ride along. This is incredible you might say, but nevertheless that was done.

Then there was the other aspect to it, of course. These minority people were militarily involved and the paradox was they were defending Laos, but as far as the Laotian people were concerned, there was antipathy toward these people, the Montagnards. That is a French name, of course. There are other names for them. You have an interesting paradox because we would use black Thai, and the white Thai, which was an English terminology. Be that as it may, they were important people in the resistance and with the fall of Laos in '75, a lot of these people were refugees and came to the United States. Some of them are in Minnesota, California, North Carolina, and Wisconsin.

Q: We had been supporting them militarily?

ZIGLER: Sure. And there was a famous man named Buell. They called him Pop, his first name was Edgar. He started out, believe it or not, as an IVS man. He was a retired farmer; he might have been in his 50's. He was one of those hardy guys, a common sense guy and an effective public speaker. He would come back here to Washington and testify to Congress on behalf of the American involvement in Laos. He'd look those Congressmen right in the eye. To him, that congressman was just another guy from someplace. He was quite effective. He made quite a name for himself; he got a lot of publicity, a "Saturday Evening Post" story.

Q: He was a rural development person?

ZIGLER: He started out in IVS rural development. Then he became a U.S. government employee and was more or less king of the northern territory. He was involved in rice drops and military supplies and medical stuff, the whole shebang with support of different kinds.

Q: The regional coordinator type of person. How did you find working with the Lao people?

ZIGLER: Well with the Lao people the first thing is you have got to remember that you have two cultures, so you have the problem of language. I tried to learn Laotian because originally I was working out in the villages. Those people were not formally educated. Laos was part of the French colonial presence and French was the common language of the educated person. One of the interesting things is I would go out there and try to talk Laotian and they would look at me and all of a sudden they would realize I was talking Laotian. When they realized I was talking bad Laotian, then they could understand me. An intriguing communications problem.

Another aspect that they had and I think this is a generalization for most of the Asiatic people is they will listen to the foreigner. They won't argue with him. Then they will go back and think it all over and decide what they are going to do about it. A meeting then is appealing and not contentious.

Then, there is another interesting aspect too, and that is the influence of religion which you cannot disregard. I remember one time considering a ceremony in which AID was going to deliver to the Lao government about four or five jeeps which could be used for the rural development agency. I was talking to the two men who were Laotian heads of the rural development agency, educated in France, advanced degrees, world travelers. We were talking about what we were going to do and who was going to talk, etc. Just out of some kind of subconscious inspiration, I said, "Do you think we should have a monk to bless these Jeeps?" There was almost an obvious sigh of relief. They said yes we should. They were not going to propose it themselves because of their sensitivity to my culture, but when we got it out, it was great and grand. So here you have the impact of religion on two people, for example, that are just as sophisticated as you and I. You just can't avoid it.

Q: So, how long were you in Laos?

ZIGLER: Well I was in Laos for a total of about six years, three with AID and the rest of the time with IVS.

Q: How were they as an organization to work with at that time?

ZIGLER: The AID? Well now there is another thing too. We are talking about '64 and personnel. I don't know how it was with you but I can remember in the early days when I started, there was a month long orientation program for the AID personnel before they went overseas.

I also remember in those days, a candidate for employment with AID was visited in his home by an AID person who looked at the house, who looked at the kids, who looked at the wife and then made recommendations. Then you had people who had little cross cultural experience, this was '64. You might have had some with military experience. So here you had a group of people who in a sense were first time overseas people. This makes them a little bit different from personnel of 20 years later with Peace Corps experience and graduate degrees. So, that was a different crowd of people. In some ways then I would say that when it came to the operational level, you had a good squad of competent men that would cooperate. You didn't have much debate or argument.

Now, when it came to the directorial level, then you had a problem because of relationships to

Washington and the Ambassador and the host government. It was trickier for him than it was for us in terms of interaction and cooperation. Another interesting project has to do with American involvement during the Johnson Administration. Some people, graduate students they were, came out to Laos and Vietnam for a three months tour. The idea was to familiarize them with the situation, and then go back home and be able to report. It sounded like a good idea, and maybe it was. I was the administrative head of this squad. There were about 10 of them that came to Laos. I met them and we had our preliminaries and they were assigned. When they came back, I took them over to see Ambassador William Sullivan, a man of some note and consequence. I will say this assuming he needs defense. Any time you find a career ambassador in a difficult country, you know there is an exceptional human being. That is why he is there; it is as simple as that! Now, a political appointee is something else. Anyway, so I brought these people back to him. Of course, they had some words and congratulations and so forth and then said to one fellow, "John, tell me about the daughter of the storekeeper up there. How is her broken arm getting along?" Here is John grasping for an answer because he couldn't remember if he had seen her or if he hadn't. Sullivan went right through all 10 men with questions like that which were based on his own personal experience. That was an astounding performance. For them, they realized they weren't just talking to an ordinary bureaucrat who sits behind a desk all day long. That was convincing evidence of his involvement in Laos at the time.

Q: How did you relate to the rest of the Embassy? Did you have much connection with them?

ZIGLER: AID and USIA in Laos. Now, at that time I developed an opinion which may be questionable. I came to the conclusion that USIA people consider themselves to be the cultural forefront of the American presence because they were interested in arts and science. I'll talk about their contribution. Then the State Department considered themselves to be the political intelligentsia. This is partly understandable because of the selection process they went through in those days, the foreign service exam, the oral interviews and all this. It required consequential intellect in order to be able to do it. I would say we got along pretty good but I do want to talk about the business of USIS, and their visitation program of American people. At that time, you had the so-called cold war influence and the desire to expand or propagate the cultures of the different countries, the United States being one. They brought out entertainers. Now, the interesting thing was these entertainers were all visual or oral. They were singers, dancers, contortionists, or jugglers. They didn't tell jokes for example. There was a comedian named Joey Adams. He was evidently a popular old time humorist and comedian, but his squad were all people who would do all these visual acts because you don't have to worry about language. The problem of catching a joke is a difficult one. One performer I remember ate a cigar right there in front of everybody. This was an incredible feat. If I remember it, how many Laotians remember it? Then you had musicians of different types. I would say they were good. USIS also had, in those days, a library. They supported an English language program which are I think is a desirable thing things to do. My only criticism of their library system was that they only opened during the daytime and they weren't open at night. In fact, I even challenged them once. I'd pay for a night program if they would keep it open because I believed that adults working during the daytime would come at night. That was a judgment they made. Then you had the participant program. They had their exchange program as well as AID did.

Q: Were you involved in sending a lot of people overseas for training?

ZIGLER: In Laos? The AID mission had an educational unit that handled that. There was a man named Jim Chandler, you may have known of him. He was a mission director at one time. At that time he was in the education department. I'll talk more about this when I get to Vietnam.

This is one of the agonizing things about development's maintaining a level is the constant human resource input. We still have schools in this country because people grow up and grow out and retire, and we need replacements. That was the same there. If you did it right, you would have a continuing program educating new groups of people all the time.

Q: Well, anything else on the Laos thing?

ZIGLER: I think that is about it as far as I am concerned.

Q: OK, Let's continue a little bit about the Laos, the people involved.

ZIGLER: Charles Mann was the director. He was an interesting director because he was of European ancestry. I mean he was born and raised in Europe so he had that European Germanic type style. He was a hustler, a hard working man. There is no question about it. Anyway, he had his opinions. One of the things I was supposed to do was organize a Christmas party for the Laotian staff. I created something to be read which describes the reason for Christmas which for Americans has to do with the Baby Jesus and so on and so forth. So, I wrote this up. He axed out the stuff that related to Jesus, the Christian evidence. Another thing is it was on the tennis courts. I left a net up intentionally so that it would be a crowd control force because I didn't want people swirling all over the place. He said, "What's that tennis net? Get it out of there!" Of course, I told him why. He went along with that, I'll admit. Then we had a lot of gifts to give away and a finale. For some reason or other I was able to get a big box out of GSO. It must have been about 4x4. We got one of these good looking Laotian girls to get inside. It was wrapped up like a big Christmas box. Then we drew for the grand prize, and it was in there. You can imagine everyone's anticipation. Then when we opened up the box, out she popped, much to the joy and surprise of all.

Laotians had people that would go out and sing in villages like minstrels. They could create a song on a given topic, sometimes even in rhyme. There would be a man and woman and they would sing back and forth and together. The quality and intensity of the audience laughter would just keep getting each time a little bit higher and a little bit deeper and a little bit louder until it hit the grand top and the place just burst. The USIA used that as a method of education where they would employ singers to compose songs to "work with Americans," "boil water," or "resist the communists."

Moving on to Air America then, as you know that was an American supported airlines. They did the rice drops that I told you about. Now, we are talking about the difficulty of performance because at the top of the hills there would be anti aircraft guns operated by the enemy. The enemy at that time were North Vietnamese and the Laotians called Pathet Lao and the Chinese, too. Anyway, these anti aircraft guns couldn't depress below a certain point. They could shoot horizontal, but they couldn't

shoot down below. These pilots would actually fly in the valleys below the trajectory of the bullets in order to get through.

Then there is another humorous story about a pilot flying a plane that had an automatic pilot on it. He was flying from Thailand to Vientiane, Laos. He was all alone. It was a six passenger plane, and he got out of the pilot's section and went back to a little rest room section with a round window. The plane was set on automatic pilot and flying through Thailand, and the Thai border patrol flies up to have a look. What is going on here? Nobody's in the cockpit. He looked out the window with a magazine; when he saw them, he would wave. It was kind of humorous.

Anyway talking about airplane travel, when I landed out there the first time, I went over and saw a two motored plane that had landed. It had two seats in the front, and the passenger's seat had a bullet hole that went right up through the middle. Well, that was a good opener. Then I can remember other times being in short airfields where you would get as far back as you could and put the brakes on and the pilot would begin to rev up the motor and the plane would begin to jump and shudder, revved up as fast as it would go; then the pilot would pull off the brakes and the trees got a lot closer a lot quicker! Then there was another interesting accident which once again has to do with airplanes and the physics of flight. This was a plane which was flying up in the Xieng Khouang area which is up in the northern part where Pop Buell and the Montagnard people were. For some reason, the pilot hit some unusual kind of an air draft so that the engine was above the tail. There were three guys in it. One was Norm Sweet, you may have known him; he was a program officer, Phil Gullion and another fellow. They couldn't get up enough forward speed to get the tail up. So, the plane just shuddered straight down like it was going down an air shaft, and hit the back end first. They couldn't get enough speed to get out of it. All of them had hip or lower back injuries. All the same because all of them hit the same way.

Q: Well, you next assignment was in Vietnam. When did you move there?

Assignment to USAID/Vietnam - 1968

ZIGLER: I went there in 1968. I had a short term of a year in Washington. Warren Ziegler, who was a Peace Corps director in Nigeria, was in charge of AID training. He had seen me out in Laos and thought that maybe I should come back and work on local employee training which I tried to do, but I didn't do very well.

Then a fellow named Abe Ashkanase came by. He was being sent to South Vietnam to head up an AID training program for American and Laotian personnel. He asked me to go out there with him. At that time I ran into a quote from Oliver Wendell Holmes which said, "A man cannot be said to be judged a man of his times unless he has been involved in the passion of his times." That hit me sufficiently. I figured that is where my passion is. You can debate that. Nevertheless, I went to Warren Zigler and told him that is what I wanted to do. He was an idealistic type; he appreciated that. So, off I went to Vietnam. This was 1968 just after the Tet offensive.

At that time the situation in Saigon was such that there were planes flying around the city at night and

they would drop flares, so you had a curtain of light surrounding the city all night. The idea was to prevent the possibility of infiltration. I stayed at the downtown hotel at that time, and you could go up to the top of the hotel and see dive bombers going down attacking different enemy sites in the suburbs. Rockets would come in from time to time. Curfews sometimes as early as 6:00. You would get out of work and you would go home. That was the nature of the life.

Now, some of the people that went through the Tet offensive were nervous and cautious. I went over to see a man after Tet and the lights went out in his building for some reason or other. I was going up the steps and he was coming down. When we met, he had two guns, one in each hand, and he was shaking like he had palsy. I tell you I tried to assure him very quickly that I was a friend indeed. Here was a person who was really jittery.

A lot of AID men lived two in a house. My buddy had a number of guns. He lived in the other. He came over to me and said, "Can I put my shotgun in your closet?" I said, "Okay." Then one night I heard a lot of shouting in his room. It was after curfew so what is going on here? I presumed for a minute he was being attacked by somebody and I should charge in there and help him because he was my house buddy. I should pick up that shotgun and charge through with it. Then I realized I had shot a shotgun only once in my life. I didn't know anything about that gun. I could trip and fall; you know all the possibilities, so I didn't. The place quieted down; so I stayed in my room. What happened was, my buddy met a Filipino man in a bar and it was too late for the Filipino to get home because of the curfew. He brought him home and said, "Hey, you are going to sleep on the couch." That was all right, of course, but the Filipino wanted to take a shower at midnight, which my friend didn't want him to do. That was the reason for the shouting.

Now, while we are on the human problems of presence overseas, one of the other aspects has to do with the relationships between men or women with local nationals. You have the issue of international intermarriage. As you may know, there was a lot of attention about American men marrying Vietnamese women. The same thing for Filipinas. I would say this, from a mission management point of view, it could be argued that it is a good thing for an employee to have a woman in his house staying with him. We are talking about men in their 30's or 40's or early 50's perhaps. It means he doesn't go down to the bars. That, as you know, is a questionable situation. Then you have the reduced problem of disease. From the point of view of having a man on the job every morning at start up time, if he has a condition like that at home, good performance is more likely. Another thing, too, I found that in Vietnam a lot of those women were very protective and assertive. In a sense, these guys weren't as free to roam as you might think. These women wanted to know where their men were and what they were doing.

Q: But they were not married to them.

ZIGLER: No, they were not married. I also noted that a lot of men went out there whose stateside marriage might not have been in too good a shape and they might have been divorced within the next one, two, three, or four years anyway. Then as you and I know, people change through the passage of time, so that could be a factor. Using the Philippine reference, I was involved for a short time at Grande Island in Subic Bay with the refugees out of Southeast Asia. I met some American women

whose job it was to orient Philippine women who had met American sailors and military personnel. Most of that was done in bars and places like that, public locations. It was their opinion that these women, once given a chance to go in an ordinary legitimate way, shaped up very well. They developed into good wives. Remember, I started out on this from a managerial point of view. If you wanted to have an employee go to bed at 10:00 at night and not run around in the bars and be on the job in the morning; this is one of the conditions that makes that possible.

Q: You didn't officially endorse it I suppose, or did you have to as a manager?

ZIGLER: No, that was an interesting phenomenon. I think the way it worked was nothing was said about it, but it was something that kind of oozed around you might say and was known. Nobody that I knew of got any kind of a deleterious or negative report from the point of view of work as a result of that.

Q: Tell us about the situation in Vietnam as you saw it.

ZIGLER: Of course, at that time the war was on. This again is where unrealism raises its head. The American presence there included trying to win a war, defend a nation, and also create a republic. That is hard to do in a wartime. Even in this country and you go right back to Lincoln; leaders use an authoritarian style. That is contrary to public administration or political science concepts. That made it difficult, and yet progress was made.

Number two is, and this was something that nobody knew but learned after the fall of Saigon. I knew two men who stayed on in Saigon after the fall, one American and one Englishman. The day after the fall, the American went down to his office, he was an American contractor. He didn't know about the Saigon evacuation from where he was located. Sitting in his office was a soldier dressed in the uniform of the North Vietnamese army. Who was this soldier but the man who had worked with him for the last four years as his chauffeur! The English man had a similar situation. His former colleague was now a colonel. We are talking about infiltration and the business of how do you maintain and control security?

Now when it came to travel, you had the standard situation of what was open and what was free. You could fly or you could drive depending on what the security situation was.

Also again in Vietnam, you had a number of groups of people. You didn't have just Vietnamese. You had the Montagnards in the north and the Cao Dai down in the south. Here again is the problem of all nations of the world, how to create unity. When you have these different, strongly ethnic groups who have survived because of that ethnic strength to begin to cooperate, tolerate, give up, is a tough thing to do.

As far as the food was concerned, and this was true for Laos, the American military was there. It was an incredible establishment. They had a supermarket there that was as big as anything you have seen in the United States. There was a PX which sold everything from golf clubs to tennis rackets, camping equipment and TV sets. From the point of view of personal survival, it wasn't a problem. You could

always get fresh meat or frozen turkeys!

There was a problem with script, and at that time the American establishment had its own script, and you had to buy with that. From time to time then, they would change the script. Instead of yellow, they would switch to blue. At that time, you had a lot of this script that had floated out into the community and was owned by Vietnamese. They weren't supposed to have it. It was legal tender. The general mode would be for a person to accumulate some of this and then get an American friend who had access to the PX or the commissary to go in and buy. But you see, when the money was changed, that was a big surprise to everyone. It was never predictable. If they couldn't get it exchanged through someone, well, they just lost. So that was a control technique that was used as far as money was concerned.

Q*: What was you job?*

ZIGLER: I was head of an institution called the Staff Development Center. We trained Vietnamese adults who were employees of the US government and the government of Vietnam to be better employees. The subjects were English, typing, shorthand, accounting, data processing, management, and telephone techniques. We had a building called the Staff Development Center that was built specifically for that. There was a Canadian man, Bert Mills, who was the start up person. As you know, the start ups are so important for success, and he was an important start up, no question. Anyway, we had about 1500 students. We had an office staff of about 12-15 people and a faculty of 30-50. These were mostly returned Vietnamese AID participants. They had been in the United States and had earned their degrees and came back. They taught on a part time basis. For, example, in the English program, we had two Ph.D.s and about four masters in linguistics or teaching English as a second language.

Q: These were Vietnamese?

ZIGLER: Yes, and the rest of the faculty were Vietnamese who had degrees in agriculture, public administration, or education. It could be argued that when it comes to learning a language, that the best person to teach that language is a person who has had a similar experience. In other words, I would rather learn French from you in my beginning days than I would from a French person because you know the problems of learning French. You can help me over the hurdles. Now, when I get to a higher level, a switch is okay.

Anyway, we had the building; it had a language lab and classrooms. The faculty used to give monthly programs on the teaching of English. You thought you were in an American university with the level of the lectures given. Students were all employees of the US or the Vietnamese government. Some of the students were also taking English prior to going to the United States as participants. We also had a business section where we taught management, accounting, typing, shorthand, and telephone techniques.

Q: How long did this go on, what period of time?

ZIGLER: I got there in '68 and it was going on until the spring of '75. At that time it was terminated because the need had been considered to be met. The United States Information Agency had a tremendous English program. They taught thousands in their English language schools. That was really something.

Q: Considering the long term results, is the Center still there ?

ZIGLER: No. One of the tragedies related to that was the head of our business teaching program. Now she was an idealistic person, unrealistic perhaps, but anyway, she intentionally decided not to evacuate and stay and help the new country.

Q: Was she American?

ZIGLER: No, Vietnamese. Then when the North Vietnamese took over, they announced that all people who worked for the Americans should register. So, she registered out of integrity. What do you think happened to her? Well, they packed her up and shipped her off to one of these training programs which was more or less a prison. She actually broke down as a result and has never recovered as I understand it.

Q: Sort of a reeducation program in those camps?

ZIGLER: Yes. Now you evidenced an interest in Americans leaving. This you may or may not know, I would say there were at least 20 guys (I was one of them) who had a sense of responsibility and association with the Vietnamese. I was in the Philippines at the time of the fall, but I thought about it and others did, too. They were willing to stay on after; to stay with their comrades you might say. The American Ambassador at that time was able to make an appropriate, effective directive to them to leave which they did. There was a lot of personal involvement there with the Vietnamese people. You didn't want to abandon your friends and leave.

I also want to mention something else which would be of interest. We had a requirement to start a secretarial training program to take the places of American secretaries. We had two groups with about 15 in each. The courses that they took were in English, typing, shorthand, and different aspects of AID. Their requirements were the same as if they had been an American taking those courses here in Washington in terms of typing and shorthand. The English exam wasn't required in the USA, but we had one. We used it as an entrance test. It was from the University of Michigan. It established competency levels that could not be questioned. One of the interesting things we did was to teach something about the AID organization. We had two sets of cards. One card would say “director,” and then a related one would say “John Smith” (he was the director). With two sets, you could pair them. Then one set would be agriculture, public safety, etc., GSO, etc. We had about 15-20 titles and the names that fit them. It was fascinating to watch these girls, they were all competitive. We'd shuffle up the deck of cards with titles and lay them out to be paired. We'd time them and see who got the best time. That was a good way to develop a familiarity. I had originally in my unwisdom thought that it was better, and this might have been true from the point of view of spreading the American presence, to not have any relatives or sisters in the program. I learned later on it was a smart idea

because if you had a student in this program whose sister was already working someplace, you had a source of reference the student could use as another teacher, so that worked out all right.

Q: How were they as students? How did they succeed?

ZIGLER: Well, they did well except there were some of them had problems with shorthand. I then started a process where I would accept the failures in shorthand. They would work for me as a secretary and keep practicing. Then when they were able to pass the exam, they would be transferred to the open AID positions that they were being prepared for. The interesting thing there, now we are back to culture again, and difference and respect for age. A number of American technicians would write reports out on yellow paper, and the handwriting, of course, might be somewhat difficult and the spelling might be questionable. Once again, since they were the boss, these girls would type exactly what they read. Shorthand, as you can understand, would be troublesome because of unfamiliarity with the language, but we got them to take 80 words a minute.

Q: How long a course was it for them?

ZIGLER: As I remember it, it was three months. We gave them an IQ test. At that time AID had developed an IQ test for Vietnamese. These secretarial trainees were all over 120, as I remember, according to that test.

Q: In that three months they had to learn the language?

ZIGLER: No, they knew the language before. Now there was a selective process. We had a test and so there was a good language level, no question about that. They didn't start from scratch.

Another interesting program we had there was in cooperation with the Control Data Corporation and the AID data processing unit. We provided the facilities and some of the management assistance for training about 32 computer people, data processors and analysts. We tested over 500 people talking before we ended up with 32 candidates. Of course they all completed the training. Some of those who were in the secretarial as well as the data processing came to the United States. They worked for AID and the UN and other international organizations as well as private ones because of this competence they achieved while they were there in Saigon.

Q: What was your understanding of the rest of the program AID was sponsoring at this time?

ZIGLER: All right, now I am ready to speak with enthusiasm. I will generalize by way of introduction to say the United States has suffered and AID has suffered because what I am going to tell you is not well known. It is my understanding there was one AID man who was given the assignment to write up the history of AID Vietnam. He had three volumes completed. One went out to the so-called resources in St. Louis and the other two have disappeared so even those books have suffered.

Q: Do you know who that was?

ZIGLER: I don't know for sure. I think it was Robert Craig. Anyway, here are some of the results. By the spring of 1975, 90 agricultural development banks had been started. Now the old traditional agriculture methodology was for the farmers to borrow from the Chinese money lender. His interest rates could be up to 100%. What this meant was that these people with their own money, this was self-funded essentially, had created a local bank and from that they got appropriate loans at a fair rate of interest. That was good. Also, when the French left Vietnam, something like 750 students took the baccalaureate exam, which is equivalent of high school. Now this was again part of the French colonial methodology of providing opportunities and reward for advancement to selected people. That was the way they did it. But the last school year, with AID support, which would have been the school year of '74, there were 75,000 students who took the baccalaureate exam. That was the same number of school years. Now whether it was exactly equal is something else. But that shows you the increase in the educational system both in teachers, buildings, facilities and numbers.

As you know, in the traditional French baccalaureate exam, you have to write out your answers, and the questions related to the previous questions. If you erred in some way on the first question, in terms of numbers, and you use those incorrect numbers for your second one, then that makes the second answer wrong. Well, anyway you still have to write, which I admit is a good way of determining language competence. But because of 75,000 exams, that methodology wasn't used.

Q: Did these 75,000 go to AID for their education system?

ZIGLER: Yes. AID had a test expert who developed a true-false, multiple choice test that used automated methodology to correct the exams.

Also that spring, the medical school which was run by the American AMA produced the largest graduating class of doctors in the world. Now that doesn't necessarily mean it was the best. They had the largest number. Also, the dental school had just finished the first year, and they might have had the same level in numbers. There was a public administration school that had about 1,000 students. There were some sad stories. One, I remember, was the president of the student body, on a wrong side ideologically, who was thrown off the third floor. That was the end of his student career.

Another significant achievement was rice sufficiency. The production in 1974 was enough to be sufficient for the entire South Vietnam if transportation was possible, but that you see, was limited or interdicted.

There were 5,000 returned AID participants. This is everything from a short termer to a Ph.D. Another incredible human resource, there were supposed to be 180,000 Vietnamese who had worked for foreigners. This was a consequential human resource group because regardless of what they did, they learned something about difference or change or modernity which could be used and expanded.

Q: Where did you get these numbers?

ZIGLER: Well, I picked them up while I was there in one way or another. For instance, the man who was in the development of the ag banks program told me his experiences

Q: Do you know whether these institutions are still functioning?

ZIGLER: I don't know. You know, you run into some tricky business in trying to modernize. In my IVS days in Laos, I thought I would get our Laotian employees to put their money in the banks and that would be modern money saving. Since I was the boss, they did. We would go down to the bank each pay day. They had their bank books, and the numbers kept getting a little bigger. Then one day the Lao government shut down the bank. It was a French bank, and it was shut down for about three months. The savings were in there. When the bank finally opened up, what do you think happened the first day? Who was late for work? So here you have another uncertainty with the development banks. How they survived I really don't know. I know rice production is up. Vietnam exports rice now.

Q: What you are saying in effect is that wherever the program had a impact on the culture it opened up the society and the impact has carried over to Vietnam today?

ZIGLER: Absolutely. In fact, usually some of the important people regardless of what country, have been associated with AID. I would agree on that, no question. Now for inducements for change because we haven't talked about that. In a way, we did about Laos when we said, "If you want to build something or other, we'll provide you the cement and roofing sheets."

One of the strategies used in rural areas of Vietnam, particularly in the rice area when AID tried to get farmers to grow more rice or better rice or two crops was a plan make it possible for the village storekeepers to obtain consumer items like radios, bicycles - things that a farmer would want that he didn't have. There it was right in the store. He didn't have to go to far off Saigon. So this inducement was right there so he would try and do better, get more money so he could buy from the storekeeper. The storekeeper up to that time didn't have the capability of getting new supplies. An interesting development concept. Other achievements of AID were airports, roads, and bridges. I guess they are still there.

Q: How did you find working with the Vietnamese generally?

ZIGLER: That was an interesting experience of course. A couple of things, number one relates to the idea of learning the local language. Well, for me, everybody that I worked with wanted to speak English and hear English. It is true that if I knew Vietnamese and I walked through the office and heard the people speaking Vietnamese, I would know what they were talking about, which might be beneficial. But when I talked to them, they didn't want to speak Vietnamese at all. So, English was the language in the office.

Then there were a couple of other cross-cultural experiences that I will cite. This has to do with status and so on. I remember driving one time up to the school, and there were all kinds of students standing around. These were adults, of course. We had two or three men who were maintenance or cleaning men. I thought I would show these waiting students that even the big boss can carry the boxes in from his car. So I loaded up about two or three of them. It was quite a stack. I paraded through all these students waiting to go to class. Eventually my top Vietnamese aide came to me and said, "You know,

that wasn't a very good idea." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Carrying those boxes in from your car." He went on to explain that what I had done, in a way I had insulted or demeaned or lowered visually my rating of these maintenance men. They felt that the big boss, Mr. Zigler, didn't think that they could carry boxes.

And another interesting one: I had moved into a large house with another AID man who was head of the data processing section. He had his crew of about 39 Vietnamese people and I had my group of 15 staff and 30 some teachers. We'd have parties which was part of the goodwill program of course, so we sent out an invitation. Everybody likes a free meal and dancing and music. We did it on one of those old reproducing machines , remember the kind with the blue ink, ditto. We wrote it "come one come all," "hot dogs," "dancing," "drinks." We thought that was an informal, happy, congenial invitation, and distributed it to everyone. We found out that almost all of the Americans came and most of his Vietnamese, but on my side very few of the Vietnamese came. We had ordered enough hot dogs and drinks and everything for the total numbers. Anyway, I when the next week came around I asked my assistant what do you think happened? Well I'll tell you I think it was your "invitations." I said, "What do you mean; it was friendly and happy." "Yes, but it was the wrong way. You should have had a properly printed formal invitation, and then they would have believed you were serious. You see, when you sent them that other one, they didn't think you were serious. So they didn't want to go. They didn't have to go. If you would have sent them something else, they would have had an obligation."

Then we move on to another aspect of interaction. The people I associated with were of an equal educational level as I. They lived, as you might presume, in the city, and I would invite them from time to time, along with other government officials, to my house. Sometimes they would come and sometimes they wouldn't. Eventually I learned that a number of the "no shows" was due to the fact that they thought they were expected to reciprocate. And if they reciprocated, they didn't have the ability to reciprocate at the same level that they thought they should. They didn't have all the same color cups, or enough plates, or enough money.

Another interesting issue had to do with the use of the toilet seats. As you know, there are many cultures that use the squat system and a hole in the floor. At the school we were outfitted with the American equipment and we had the standard commodes. Many times I would see heel prints from shoes right on top of the seat. They didn't lift it up; they just stood on the seat. Again that is a difference in lifestyle, and again these were people who had been educated for four years or more in the United States.

Another interesting thing I did relates to the cross cultural aspects of student life. On a Saturday morning, I had a class for all people planning to study in the United States. I had sessions on such things as how to take a test. Most of these people had worked through the French exam system which started from the top and worked to the bottom. Now, in the system we use, there are 10 or 15 questions in a category. If you can't answer the first one, you skip it, you go down until you find one you can and then you back up. As you know, through the passage of test time, sometimes you find answers that you have forgotten. Well they would be more inclined to do question one and then do two and then three, which is a poor way. So we gave them test taking experience. We had sessions

on social life and sessions on college life and so on.

The way I would start it, on the first day I was to come in late. These were all government officials at that time. They were already in their seats, white shirts usually with a tie. I'd come in with a pair of old tennis shoes with the strings untied and flopping and a sloppy pair of pants and a tee shirt hanging down low. I would swagger down the aisle and then stand up on the table right in front of them and start to talk. My message was "when you get to America, don't pay any attention to what the professor looks like. What you want to do is pay attention to what he says and what you can hear." That was always a startler for them I'll admit because it was unconventional.

The same way with doing business. This again is a social style. You and I are serious because we are sitting down. If we were standing up in the hall, that is not a serious discussion, so if you want to be serious with a person, you have to sit down. Also, you don't sit on a table. Anyway, those are some examples of working with the Vietnamese people.

To finish up, I also was involved in American orientation to the mission. We had an orientation every month. It ran for about two or three mornings. The Mission Director would come over and put in a 15 minute talk. We'd have movies and lectures about different aspects of Vietnamese politics and culture. The mission required it or wanted it. I did it there at the Staff Development Center. Sometimes USIA people would come over. Very seldom did any Embassy people or any other agencies that were out there. Voluntary agency people would send people over. I also did there orientation for new Vietnamese employees about what AID was doing, the problems of the world, the population increase, food, etc. We'd have 20-30 people because of the size of the mission. I used an interpreter.

Q: What was your view of the overall American effort in Vietnam at that time? What were we trying to do given that Vietnam was a controversial subject; could we have accomplished anything in AID terms?

ZIGLER: You remember I recited all the AID performance record. It is my opinion that if North Vietnam would have stayed north of the 17th parallel, that South Vietnam today would be a gem in the history of development partly because of the incredible human resources. You had a nation that had both agriculture as well as tourism potential. There was access to the ocean as well as the interior, which is up about 3000-5000 feet. There were different climatic conditions there, which makes it appealing to tourists. It would have been a real achiever. It would be superior to Korea, I think, not necessarily in heavy industry but in the world of human appeal and achievement. So that is a generalized response.

Q: What about the North Vietnamese's approach or strategy or understanding of the development process? Did you have any perception of that at the time?

ZIGLER: To me the fact that the North Vietnamese were able to engender such continued endeavor on the part of people to go to war is incredible. When you think about the results which took them years to achieve. Of course, then they have this history of success against the oppressor which they

don't forget. They resisted the Chinese. They resisted the French. I know Frenchmen at Dien Bien Phu who told me their machine guns were so hot they didn't dare touch the barrels. They just sat there and mowed the attackers down. The Vietnamese kept coming and eventually they over ran. So, you had this incredible purposefulness that was maintained. As you know there were all kinds of tunnels that were dug under Saigon. I talked about this human infiltration.

Now, when it comes to development itself, I don't think they did very much except survive. Now they got some assistance, no question about that, from the outside. I don't know exactly how it got there, but we know about the Russian Chinese association. That enabled them to carry on their military actions. I don't know if they got any food or anything like that. I think they were pretty self-sufficient.

Q: I guess this the point you mentioned earlier, that because of the war some people felt it was a hopeless situation for trying to do development work of any kind. We were really going to lose in the end in terms of development because of the war situation?

ZIGLER: Well, when you think in terms of numbers of people as human resources when 180,000 had association with foreigners and then the 5,000 AID returnees. Then you had USIA people and you also had military people. How many of them were evacuees I really don't know, but certainly their influence and the people still in South Vietnam are influential; some are people that were associated with the American presence in one way or another.

Q: Well, anything else about the Vietnam experience?

ZIGLER: Yes, I'd like to say this about the American team, and I'm talking particularly about the field people. I will contest that it was the best trained, best prepared group of people that the United States has sent anywhere anytime, period. Why? Well, as you remember they started out with a training program here in Washington over in Rosslyn, the Foreign Service Institute area. They studied the Vietnamese, and the cultures and language for months. They achieved a level, I think it was FS-2.

Then it was decided to do training in Hawaii, an interesting idea. Instead of training in Washington, they would move out to Hawaii. From a training point of view, psychologically and physically it had appeal because it was separated from the home base. Trainees could concentrate. Also it was a new culture. It was also easy to bring in people from Southeast Asia to serve as teachers.

Then you had an interesting organizational situation. It was a new program, and it was in the United States. Administrators could go out and check easily. It was USA. It was not foreign travel, so budget wise it was a little easier to arrange travel. So you had a lot of people who talked to trainees, and the people who they talked to were usually the talkative ones and usually the discontented ones. So, the reports for awhile were of discontent and negativism. As a result, Hawaii training was terminated rather than maintained and it came back to Washington.

So anyway we are talking about the time spent in the preparation. I can remember an unusual program when there was lots of AID money available. We took a squad of trainees into Tennessee and a

couple of times to West Virginia. They would go out and research and develop in one week a development plan for a county.

Q: This is part of the development studies program?

ZIGLER: No. This was separate from that but it included some of the ideas. They did not have a language problem. But they had all the human factors, they had resources and records available, and they could write it up. You talk about spin-off; a number of those communities used those plans for development purposes. The report was turned over to them; it was reviewed before they left. How many national developmental agencies had the money and the time and the capability to do that? I have never heard of any other country that did it. So there we go on that. That is the one reason I make this argument for the best prepared group of people.

Q: What was the size of the mission roughly?

ZIGLER: I think it was over 1000. Then another interesting thing, we are talking about Saigon. The Texaco company had put on some TV shows in the USA called Texaco Theater of the Air. These were movies and they shipped some of them to Saigon. These were American classics like **?**Our Town." We had a movie projector, so we would advertise, but this was always with a curfew. We'd show it at 6:00 and be done by 7:30. You sit and watch and wonder how long it takes to go home. It was not the most relaxing.

Q: Did you visit any of the rural areas and the pacification posts where we had people assigned?

ZIGLER: No.

Q: What was the situation there?

ZIGLER: I can't talk to that really. I know men who went out there and I traveled around as a tourist, but I never talked to them. You have other people who could speak more effectively and competently on that than I. No, I think that is the end as far as I am concerned in Vietnam.

Worked with Vietnamese refugees at a transfer center at Subic Bay, Philippines - 1975

ZIGLER: That was in 1975. It is part of AID history too, and that was in Subic Bay, Grande Island, which was a holding area, staging area for Vietnamese people who were refugees. I had gone to the Philippines before the fall of Saigon for a TDY assignment which was tacked on to the end of my tour. I thought that was a great way to finish up in Southeast Asia. I was down there working on a rural development public administration course. One Friday, we got word that people were needed to go up to Subic Bay to process Americans coming through from Vietnam, and I volunteered. I remember John Hummon, he was the Deputy Director in the USAID/Philippines at the time. These Americans coming through at that time, all some had on was a tee shirt and a pair of shorts and some clogs, for example, no passport.

Q: These were American refugees?

ZIGLER: Yes, who evacuated in a hurry. Anyway, we were waiting to take the plane up to Subic Bay. I asked Hummon, "Why are we going up there as civilians because Subic Bay is run by the Navy?" He said to me somewhat disdainfully, "If you don't know why we are going there, you shouldn't go." Anyway, I went. The first day or two were spent with American personnel coming in by ship or by plane. Most of them by ship at that time. There they were processed on to the United States.

Then I stayed on for another month maybe two, I don't remember for sure right now, on Grande Island as the American civilian representative to work with the Vietnamese refugees. There were 300 Cambodians who showed up in a naval ship. We had about 10,000 people there. The Navy did all the operations. In other words, they cooked the food and hauled it across in a helicopter and unloaded it in the dining hall. It was cooked on the mainland and eaten on the island.

The island was a great idea because, you see, there was no need for any type of walls, fences, gates or anything like that. The water did the job. It had originally been used by the Spanish in the old days as a defense against the invasion of the port, and then the Americans had it. There were a number of buildings there. One was used for a hospital, another for an eating facility and things like that. We organized English classes. We had a village council. There were different kinds of athletic activities, one was a volleyball tournament. These refugees would come and then they would go on to Guam.

Q: What kind of screening were they going through? Any?

ZIGLER: Yes. The only screening at the time was these people would come in off the boats and they had to go through a customs check which was kind of uncertain. The Americans did it; the Filipinos didn't do it. I can remember people coming in there with two or three elephant tusks four or five feet long, beautiful ones that were confiscated. Medicines were confiscated and so the users had to go to the medical place for replacements. Anything unusual was examined and taken.

Q: What about their political orientation?

ZIGLER: Ah! Nothing, no clue on that. They just walked through and got a piece of paper with their on it recorded. In fact on that score, and this again is history. The original agreement with the Philippine government and this was going to be at Clark Field, there would be something like 300 refugees would go through and no military personnel. That agreement was violated within about the first half day. There was one group of young men that came in at one time. They all went into a building and all of a sudden they came out and they all had on blue denims and white tee shirts. The other clothes they had were no longer around anymore. Where did this bunch of young guys come from, 18-19 year old young men? Well, you know as well as I do, it was some kind of a military unit.

Q: How did these people happen to be the ones to escape?

ZIGLER: I don't know. The methods of escape were several. First, there was official American

assistance. You remember there were some ships off the shore of South Vietnam. I'll talk about that in a minute. Then there were people who got on their own boats, or they hired boats and got to the Philippines. Other people, as you may remember, went over to Thailand.

Q: What about the Vietnamese that worked for the Americans?

ZIGLER: They were all in the group. I can remember some of the people who worked for me at the Staff Development Center came through. You talk about poignancy, I remember this one woman, once free, now defeated. I can remember her sitting over there looking into the black of the night all by herself. I had a notion to go over and put my arm around her. I still wish I had now, but I didn't.

Q: Where did these people go? How did they get settled?

ZIGLER: That particular woman, believe it or not, ended up at the American Red Cross here in Washington, DC, and working on refugee problems. Others, of course went into business. Some went down to Australia, but most came to the States. Some of them, as you know have been incredibly successful. I know one woman who worked with CORDS (Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support), and you know about CORDS. That was a military involvement. She was a trainer. She is now essentially the CEO of an office cleaning establishment in Washington, DC. They have over 300 people working for them. That is a consequential outfit. That is a big business. She has all kinds of people and she is the big shot. She had married an American man and then for some reason they were divorced. Anyway, she started working for a nonprofit organization and then she switched to office cleaning and maintenance and there she is. Another one got a CPA. For two years all she did was study, didn't do anything else. You couldn't get her to go to a movie; she went home and studied. Then she got her CPA and now she works for the Washington Post. Those are three examples. So, anyway, from a success point of view, they did pretty well.

There is another interesting event that might be mentioned here on this Grande Island time. The champions of the volleyball tournament wanted to play a game against an American volleyball team. That was reasonable, so I called the navy base and he said, "We are going to send out a team. We are going to send out our Seals." You know about the Navy Seals. Those guys are tough guys. I said, "Okay with me," so we made a date and a time. We were on the island and you could see the mainland. The game was to be played at 2:00. It gets to be 1:30 and they haven't shown up. Then all of a sudden I see this little speck; it is a boat. Believe it or not, at 2:00 the boat tied up at the pier right on time! These Seals were a sight to behold. They were really impressive. To be a Seal you had to be a physical person and they had real bodies and their tee shirts were tight and they had blue pants on and white sports shoes on and white sox with stripes around them. They really looked terrific, no question about it. So, I led them over to the Vietnamese team. We had just put up some sticks and strung a net across and put down some lines. You know how you make the old lime lines. Here is one Vietnamese player with old shoes on and no strings, old military boots or no shoes at all. Tee shirt sagging down or no shirts. No similarity at all, they were just lucky to have their bodies clothed. So the teams began to warm up. This Navy team had different kinds of drills. They had one Seal tap it up to the net, and another guy set it up and then a spike, bang! They would go through these

routines, and they were impressive!

Well, then came time to play, and the Vietnamese served. The Navy guy gets it and sets it up to the net for the spiker and bang he misses it by about two inches. One point for Vietnam. Next time Navy hits into the net and the ball flies back 50 feet, two points for Vietnam. Then the next one goes out of bounds a little bit. The score was soon six to zero. Everybody was embarrassed. The Vietnamese were embarrassed that they were beating these Americans so bad. The Seal's were ashamed of themselves, too. Fortunately, they made a point and broke the ice. The Vietnamese won the first game; the Seals won the second; who do you think won the third? The Vietnamese again. Wow! Of course, the Vietnamese would have been satisfied to have been defeated by this American team.

Then there was something else about the performance of the American military which sometimes can really be impressive. There was on Grande Island a little house that had been used for a recreation facility. It was the headquarters for the refugee team. So, it was a house with a little kitchen and some bunk beds. The commander of the whole base was one of these super men. He wouldn't sleep on the bunk bed at all. His men would sleep in the bunk bed. He slept on the floor. I remember he got on the phone one night and said "I want 300 men out here by 5:00 am." By golly, I'll tell you, you could hear the boats coming in from 4:00 on, and by 5:00 there were 300 men ready to put up tents and prepare for the arrival of a large group of refugees. They were coming in by ships, a flotilla type situation.

Q: Did they close the camp?

ZIGLER: Yes, but the camp continued on for some time. One thing, my tour of duty was over and I was supposed to come back as far as Washington was concerned. Eventually they moved them on out. I got back to Washington in '75. There I began to work with the training section. You may remember Dan Creedon, who was head of AID training then.

Returned to AID/Washington to work on the AID training program - 1975

Q: This is now what year?

ZIGLER: 1975. I had several responsibilities. You may remember the IDI program, International Development Intern. Their first five weeks were spent in training in Washington. I was responsible for the first four weeks. Of course, obviously you would have speakers that would come over. They would learn how to do the log frame, how to do cables, and AID procedures and regulations, which made them useful, knowledgeable, and competent employees. One of the interesting things was, when they finished the basic IDI training, they knew more about AID procedures and practices than a new employee who was three to five grades above them. These new officers would have to sneak around and ask how to do it, a cablegram or a project design, for example. This caused a certain amount of cynicism and possible amusement on the part of the IDI's. IDI spent a year in Washington, DC before the field assignment.

Q: What was your impression of the IDI's that came in at that time? These were the young IDI's?

ZIGLER: Yes. There were several things. The typical IDI at that time had been a Peace Corps person or overseas experienced in some way. Then had a graduate degree in the area of AID employment such as public health or agriculture, and maybe worked after completion on graduate study. One interesting aspect, few IDIs had bank accounts. So, when they were paid, they had to have their checks delivered. They went over to the bank and lined up. They didn't have an account! Well, that was part of their adaptation to the world, which eventually they did.

Then, there was another interesting situation. This has to do with equal opportunity in employment. The professional composition of an IDI class changed from class to class. The first class would have four agriculture people, three public health, two accountants and five educators. The next class would be two agriculture, six public health, two accountants depending on the anticipated need at the time of recruitment. This was where equal opportunity recruiting was consequential. There was a group within AID, as you know, that was responsible for that issue; so you had the ratio of female and male numbers and then minority numbers. Sometimes it seemed to me all things considered, you had people who had been recruited in order to meet this minority and female numbers requirement and they might not have been the best possible candidates available at that time. Now, I'm not saying they didn't achieve, but as I looked at them at those first days, there was reason for doubt. That is a personal Zigler observation that I'll admit. As I said, most of them had overseas experience. You may remember the general opinion on overseas experience in the selection of IDI's was it wasn't what they did, it was the fact that they had survived for two years overseas away from home. If they could do that, they could move to higher level AID type work situations. There was also a demonstrated capability to learn a language, for as you know, if you learn one, the second one is easier. Another element of the training had to do with the way I worked with them and how each day of a class was organized.

We had a videotape machine in the classroom. The team for the day would be one person who would be the moderator, whose job it would be to confirm speaker participation. He would call up and say, "Are you planning to come as promised to the IDI training program, verify and confirm." He's got to use the AID phone book to do that. He began to find it was useful and educational. This was all for the future. Having done that, he goes through the list of four or five speakers. We usually had four or five subjects in a day. Then, come his day, he introduces everybody, which gives him public speaking experience. Then, the videotape guy records the session. Then we also had a person who would listen to the lectures, and on the next day, he would give a review of the previous day which would be part of the warm up exercises. He too was videotaped, so you had three people. See, once you are videotaped, somebody tells you hack or you stammer or wiggle your left ear, well you may not like that, but when you see it on the tape yourself, that's another story. That was useful in terms of improving what I might call public presence. Also the business of getting involved in the agency itself because of the need to use the phone book and find and talk and get through the secretary.

Q: What was your assessment of the value of the IDI program for AID?

ZIGLER: I think it was reasonable and desirable. If you start people in their late 20's early 30's which they were, 20 years later there is a natural movement upward. A lot of them did move up to mission leadership positions of different types in different places. Another reason on this is, you bring in new

people; they are coming in with new ideas. Hopefully it is useful to have new ideas rather than a repetition of old ideas. The old ideas are already in place by the experienced elders so you have this combination that could be beneficial.

Q: Did you have classes with people more than 30 years old?

ZIGLER: There was an IDI that I remember who was over 30. He had a doctorate, and at that time there was a freeze on employment at AID. The only way he could get on the payroll was to become an IDI.

Q: What about after your course, what happened to them?

ZIGLER: Then they were assigned to offices in AID/Washington for one year and then to the field. I, myself, never followed up on them.

I also did orientation for new employees with Mike Guido, a famous name in AID. I lectured on cross cultural situations. I taught the famous log frame.

Then I was also involved in The Project Design and Evaluation course which was offered about every two months. That was started as you remember, by Herb Turner, It was conceived out of "management by objective" (MBO) concepts, which was a Harvard creation. Just last week I talked to a guy who is in Ghana. I knew him in '78. He is in the development world and he says that the log frame is still being used in different ways for planning and evaluation. Now, whether it makes it more likely that you'll be successful in a project is doubtful, but it sure makes you think it all through. Also I went overseas on some TDY's once to Indonesia, once to Jamaica and once to Haiti. There I did some lectures for local employees on AID history and AID programs, which went over well.

Q: What was you view of the importance AID attributed to training in those days? Was it being expanded or curtailed?

ZIGLER: I think it was beginning to diminish. You may remember one time up a Syracuse University, there was a one month mid-career training program that many people went to. From the principle of employee development, it was a good thing. You need that for growth and stimulation. I don't think they do it anymore. For instance, you went to the senior seminar. All mission directors should go to this senior seminar.

Q: Why do you think it lost some of its priority?

ZIGLER: Easy reasons are excuses called budget cuts. I believe that if management wants to; it will. Some way or another you'll find a way to do it. It may be the fact that numbers of new employees are reduced, so it doesn't seem necessary to do so much pre-employment orientation and training. Back in the Vietnam days, it was different when you had almost a hundred coming in every month. Also, you now have people who are better prepared. I think we talked about this. In the early days of AID employment, we didn't have applicants who had the experience of overseas life and who were trained.

A current applicant would be one who went to the Peace Corps because he wanted to be employed overseas, and this was a step in that direction. So you may have people that in the human relations point of view may be better qualified than the old timers were. The old timers maybe knew how to build a dam or a bridge better than these current employees. It seems like you had more administrators now than you have doers. So you can contract for the doers.

Q: You did that for how long?

ZIGLER: That was about four years. Then I went to Ghana.

Assignment in USAID/Ghana for agricultural management training - 1979

Q: You went to Ghana in what year?

ZIGLER: I went to Ghana in 1979. This was a project that was part of the Ministry of Agriculture's to improve the performance of their field personnel. These are people that we might think of here in the United States as county extension agents. There were two courses that were offered, one in project management which used the concepts of the log frame in budgeting and procurement. The other one was in personnel management which had to do with job descriptions, utilization of personnel, budgeting too. It was in Quadaso near a major city called Kumasi. This Quadaso school was an AID funded agricultural school. We used on a two week basis, classrooms, dormitory rooms, kitchen, and dining room. We had a special group of cooks. We used two classrooms. It was quite an acceptable facility there. I, Bob Zigler, was the last in a line of three Americans. I was to phase out and the Ghanians were to phase in. Those that preceded me were Bill Berg, Jerry Woods, and Bill Fuller. In my second year there, two Ghanaians arrived who had come back from the United States, returned participants with graduate degrees, to phase in as I phased out.

Somebody went back there a year or two after I left and the program was still going. That was commendable. The Ministry of Agriculture was willing to maintain it.

Q: What level of people were you training?

ZIGLER: Well, most of them were college graduates, they were field people for the ministry.

Q: They were out in the districts?

ZIGLER: Yes, most went through the School of Science and Technology at Kumasi.

Q: They were district managers,

ZIGLER: Yes, on county agents. We taught in English because that is the official language of the country.

Q: How did you find them as students?

ZIGLER: Well, that is interesting because now we are back to this diversity of a nation. There are a number of ethnic groups in Ghana. They all have opinions about each other. It's true they associate together. They don't fight or brawl or anything like that. In one particular class, there were a couple of students joking and laughing. This other student who was from the coast, the sophisticated coast, said, "Well, that is the way those guys are, bumpkin types." From the point of view of working in the classroom, there was no problem. The Ministry assigned them throughout the country. There may have been some concern about the person's ethnic group and his work community, but it didn't seem like that was the case.

Q: Were they good students by and large?

ZIGLER: They did well. What we did we used some of that strategy I told you about with the IDI's. We had a videotape camera there and chairmen and rapporteurs. All that was fascinating to them because they learned how to videotape it and see themselves.

Q: How many people?

ZIGLER: Well, I was there for three years and we usually had about four classes I'd say eight classes a year. Eight times 20 is 160 times three is 540.

Q: Did they go back for another round?

ZIGLER: Yes, they could come back for the other program.

Q: You said the other program; was there a second program?

ZIGLER: Yes. One in project management and one on personnel management and two weeks for each one.

Q: How do you relate personnel management particularly in the Ghanaian system with what you brought from the US?

ZIGLER: I would say our course was "theory" and the students would have to adapt. You have got a problem, and this right back to basic considerations in AID project management and development. We are backing up all the way to the beginning. I think in the early days in the 40's and 50's, the only things those AID technicians knew was what they did in the plains of Arizona or the farms of Indiana. So, that is what they tried to introduce which was perhaps questionable. You may run into stories, and I remember one about Greece which had to do with an UNRRA combine. Now, for combines, at least a good combine you should have at least 100 acre fields. Now how many 100 acre fields are there in Greece? So they sat there and rusted away. Now then for the realities. It is true you can go to school and learn the theory, but now we are talking about practice. Now related to your question, we did the follow up. I can remember several times we went to visit a trainee sometime after. We had a questionnaire. We asked, "Would you fill out this questionnaire?" He said, "Sure I'll fill it out. Do you have a pencil or pen?" We'd find one. "What is the date?" I looked up at the wall and there is

a calendar there that is two years old. Here you have a man trying to do a job. He didn't even have a pencil or pen. Here you have this old calendar; how can you expect a man really to do much. This was one of the Ghanaian problems of the time. This was the status of the national government. Then we'd talk about procurement methodologies and come up with a procurement plan. It is true you can learn the process and hopefully then maybe you will apply it.

This is in another day, but I was, in my earlier days, involved in what was called a Polish program. This is would have been now in the 50's. About eight Polish agriculture students were brought to the United States by the Church of the Brethren, and they were assigned to different farms or schools for a year and then they went back home. One man was interested in the vegetable production. He was from a farm outside Warsaw where they grew vegetables in the summertime. The Polish farmer learned about greenhouses or hothouses. He wanted to go home and do that. His father was opposed. I think it was something like seven or eight years this man had this objective and never realized it until Papa died. Then he built a hothouse and changed the whole production of the farm. So here you have competency or familiarity unused until the times are right.

Q: Did you find that was a problem with the people you were training in terms of getting them to learn the theory of the project and the ministry and the culture.

ZIGLER: Well, to me they learned it but they didn't apply it. They had no project, no reason for procurement practices. I think on the personnel side, that was limited because most of these were one or two man field operations. Writing job descriptions were not too consequential. The intellectual stimulation may have been a good thing.

Q: Did you visit them at their posts, I guess you did.

ZIGLER: Yes and I recorded this absence of physical equipment.

Q: This was part of a larger project was it?

ZIGLER: Yeah there was another one in Erdum. I don't know if you remember that one.

Q: That was in agriculture wasn't it?

ZIGLER: They were trying to improve the local government. Now this was during the first Jerry Rawlins administration.

Q: How was it then, was it positive?

ZIGLER: As far as acceptance, no problem. The economy was bad, as I said before. There were people with bright ideas that could be used. Maybe the Polish reference provides hope.

Q: Anything else?

ZIGLER: A couple of things on the human side. I was a member of the Rotary there in Kumasi. I was the only non-Ghanaian member at that time. These men had traveled all the world, maybe educated outside of the country. Usually in the Rotary meeting you had a toast. We never ever had lunches because of the economic cost; we had evening sessions and we didn't eat. We might have a toast with a glass of beer and we might not. We might not even have a glass of water or a glass. Then we would raise our hands as a toast. These were managers of banks, superintendents of schools, professionals. We'd toast the Rotary worldwide with a symbolic gesture.

Q: They didn't have any resources.

ZIGLER: Right. You couldn't buy the beer even if you wanted it. Another interesting thing about me, I lived in a house in Kumasi. You may have gone up there; it was the first stop going north. I had two bedrooms available in this house for field trip people. It was common practice going north to come to Kumasi on Monday or Tuesday and spend the night, and then return on Thursday or Friday. I had a social situation which was very appealing. Many times the Ambassador would be one of these people, the head of USIA or the AID Director. In terms of isolation, it is true, I was the only US government person there. There were some missionaries and another AID contract person in the area. No, I wasn't really alone at all.

Q: You make any friends?

ZIGLER: Quite a few. Once again, you still had a problem with them. If you were willing to take them out to a restaurant or over to your house, they were willing to come along. They didn't have this reluctance of the Vietnamese people. A lot of them were very interesting as you would imagine, for example, a manager of a bank. There was one man there who was a Ghanaian veteran who fought in WWII in India and Southeast Asia, the Burma Trail. Here he is at your house in Africa, incredible.

Also, I did some training in the villages. For some people this was unbelievable and difficult because I had to live in the village. I would go down the street and here was a woman selling those little old cones of peanuts, a banana. Breakfast eaten. I'd go off to the project.

We had a Fourth of July event for the Americans which I hosted on my front lawn. We had sack races and pot luck. Mostly the dishes were beans because that is about all you could buy in the market for a party. Three Americans went to some fame. One guy was Ray Silverman who is now with the museum at Michigan State. Craig Woodson is an expert on African music, and another named Mike Warren, you may have heard of him (he died), was on the University of Iowa faculty. He had a considerable involvement in Nigeria, too. He married a Nigerian woman who was in Ghana. At his funeral ceremony, people from both countries came to it.

I also taught a time management course in Accra to AID personnel several times. On my way home, I also stopped off in Ivory Coast and Senegal and time management and AID history and programs to the local employees. In Senegal, I taught French.

Q: What was there reception to the time management course?

ZIGLER: Well, you know how it is, everybody listens to you . I forgot the director's name in Senegal. I think it was David Shear. He was a hustler type. I taught it to him and his deputy, just the two of them. They sat there and listened. You know how it is. Well, I would say that is essentially it for Ghana, so we can move on now to Upper Volta.

Transferred to USAID/Upper Volta (Burkina Faso) - 1982

Q: What year?

ZIGLER: Well, Upper Volta comes on in 1982. I had several projects there. In the country itself, there were 17 different ethnic groups, and as you might believe, they couldn't talk to each other in African languages. French was the common language. Anytime anyone wants to criticize colonialism should note some positive results, one of which was commonalty and communication. The project I had involved wells and public health. Public health education and well construction, they had a common relationship. The interesting thing there was a considerable period of time between when I got there and when the previous American left, the project manager. There was a Burkinabe, and he was doing a good job. It was an interesting human presence problem, so I let him continue with reasonable independence.

Q: What about the wells program and the health program; was that effective?

ZIGLER: That was done by a contractor. They lived on site. They were Americans, but they could speak French, of course, with their local team members.

Q: Were they well received in the villages?

ZIGLER: You have a problem with wells and pumps. These were hand pump wells. I can remember seeing 15-20 people lined up to pump, pump, pump. I don't think by the time I left there, there had been any type of pump that survived very long in a village because of constant use. One of the things that really needs to be done, and they tried to do it, was to have spare parts and somebody responsible for well maintenance. That was an issue, you know, how to keep those pumps working.

Q: Were there problems about the locations of these wells?

ZIGLER: I never heard of any. The people that put them in, put them in at appropriate locations. They all seemed to work. I never heard of any dry wells. Now you talk about dry wells. Here we go back to Laos again. There was an American man who ran a well drilling team. He used a hand powered drill which meant he could go down about 30 feet. That was about as far as he could go. In southern Laos, there was an important political man who wanted to have a big soiree, a big party. It had to do with his daughter's marriage, so that meant a lot of visitors. This well driller was down there trying to find water. I think he went down something like 40 times. It was all hard pan rock and he couldn't get through. Forty times unsuccessful. Now you talk about a public relations problem or a public relations success. If he would have hit water; it would have been glorious, but he didn't.

Q: What about the public health part? Was it related to water use?

ZIGLER: The project goal was to teach good hygiene, so the two elements combined significantly. Another project I was involved in had to do with village artisans. This was an interesting project in which a program was taught by local people to local people. They taught courses in carpentry, blacksmithing, plumbing, electricity, and small motor maintenance, that had an application in the local village. They'd come in and learn it and go back and use it. Now one of the problems is, if you train a man, hopefully, he'll go back home. This is an AID participant training problem and we had the same problem there: to get them to go home. Nevertheless, it was an all Burkina Faso project done by competent people.

One of the interesting human problems again for this one was AID supplied some funds every month for the operation of the program. That was one of my responsibilities of course. I had a counterpart in the government of Upper Volta then. I noticed two or three times I'd make a suggestion, he was kind of cool. This was surprising. I couldn't understand why this somewhat lack of cooperation exists until I was over at the accounting office and one of the people said to me, "You know, you have a check down here for the rural training program." I said, "How long has it been there?" He said, "Oh, about three weeks." Nobody ever came after it. It is right there in the pile. So, I called up and he sent a guy over. Now, here you have an interesting phenomenon where his attitude toward me was such that he thought I was trying to use economic pressure to agree to what I wanted to do, and he resisted because he wasn't going to be pressured. I didn't know why he resisted. Of course neither one of us knew the check was on file ready to be picked up. Of course once that was done we were ready...

Q: He thought you were holding back.

ZIGLER: Sure.

Q: What is your feel for the counterpart as far as doing business?

ZIGLER: Well, number on it is an aspect of training, no question about that. One of the things I always used to believe is that whenever you trained somebody you should send two people not just one. If you send just one, the guy can go home and forget it. If you send two, then you have sort of a check and balance and (inaudible) which makes it more likely that what is taught will be used.

Q: In terms of the day to day working, did you find that training worked?

ZIGLER: I would say so but once again there are limitations. What are the forces that impinge? That's an unknown, it is as simple as that.

Another project we did is still in existence today. Because AID had a number of participants going in the United States, there was a problem of English language instruction. Of course, I had my history of Vietnam behind me. Then an AID participant, just returned to Ouagadougou, who had a Ph.D. in linguistics. We put together an endeavor which resulted in an English language training school which is going right today. As you know USIA has been cutting back and AID has cut back on English

language. But the school is still going on right now. According to a man who is a curator at the Museum of African Art, who went to that school, it has become a very important school in that region of Africa. Other countries are sending their people to be trained there.

Q: Is it still being supported by AID or is it on its own?

ZIGLER: It gets some USIA money but it is almost self-sufficient now. That was good. Particularly on the basis that it has become self-run, self-managed.

Another problem was the Ph.D. equivalency and the French doctorate. It is a strategy the French use if they want to impose superiority for tactical or strategical reasons on the American Ph.D.

Q: What did you find were the differences?

ZIGLER: Well, actually, the French program runs a little bit longer. I don't know whether or not it is better or more practical, but from the point of view of length of time, the French holds up.

Q: But in terms of the competence of the people who have been through the two programs?

ZIGLER: I can't really speak to that now, in 1999. I have a hunch that the American universities are more useful and more practical.

Now then, there are a couple of other activities that happened out that relates to the reality of life. The State Department had a program which I will call the "triage exercise." This was started after some bombings at US buildings. It was run by the embassy nurse. We learned how to take care of the kinds of injuries (a broken arm, a scalp wound, whatever) that come from a bomb explosion. Then the final test was a trainee team would go into a room, and here were eight or 10 people with different kinds of costume effects like a person with a red arm like it was bleeding or a victim with a plastic fitting in over his eye with a pencil stuck in it as if he had a pencil stuck through his eyeball, or a hysterical person. One was identified as the Ambassador's mother-in-law. Then we had to treat all these people and work up a departure list on the basis of injuries and which included the Ambassador's mother-in-law!

Q: This was training in emergency...

ZIGLER: From a practical point of view, there was good reason to do that.

Then there is another thing that should be said about Upper Volta, and in my summation it might pop up again too. It has to do with the loss of trained, educated personnel through political or military activities. One night there was a coup d'état. I lived in a house that was near some houses of government officials. It was dark at night and you could hear the guns going off. The smart guy turns off his lights and gets down on the floor and I did! I could hear soldiers in my backyard and front yard. Fortunately, they kept on running and didn't stop. This again is one of those factors which can affect the attitudes of a person and performance on the next day.

Another problem is health. If you are not healthy, you are not functioning. It is like a football player who has a broken arm, He's unhealthy. Well, I got hepatitis. Why did I get hepatitis? It doesn't make any difference. I did. I was out of commission for about three months.

I can remember years ago when I went to Afghanistan for the first time. There was a facility run by Morrison Knudsen. They were working on the Helman Valley dam project. They had a hotel, a garden, a restaurant. I asked why they were doing all this. They said, "We believe we should have everything ready for our technicians when they come on the scene. All they have to do is put their suitcase down, change their clothes and go to work." That's realistic. Sometimes with AID we didn't do it that way. We'd go out there and search to find a house. How long did that take? People spent too much time trying to get settled.

Q: Right, they are not working.

ZIGLER: Well, anyway I am ready to move on to a summation, according to the plan you gave me if you are ready to move to that now. I retired in 1985.

Concluding observations

Q: I see. How do you size up your career and your experience and what you think you learned in these interesting assignments?

ZIGLER: First, I think we should recognize that traditionally American foreign assistance came out of the Judeo-Christian ethic which includes the Sermon on the Mount, the Golden Rule, and the good Samaritan. Those are basic philosophical concepts that are common in many religions, I admit. Anyway, the leadership for development I believe came mostly out of the Protestant community.

Number two, I believe the physical technical types of problems, those would be like problems with water or types of crops or food production, those are all solvable. Those are what technicians can do, no question about it. But it requires additional inputs such as more water or fertilizer or new agricultural methodologies or certain kinds of seeds. The famous IRRI Rice Research Institute is a good example of that. They changed rice production. You can't stay the same; you have to add from the outside.

Then you have the human aspects and there are several of them. The players change. The Redskins of today are not the Redskins of eight years ago. How do they change? Number one they change either by age or political reasons. Then there is the absence of house arrest. When I was in Upper Volta, there was a coup d'état and the man who was head of the department of agriculture, a Ph.D. from Michigan State. He was world renowned because of view of his publications and research. He was a member of the overthrown government. He was under house arrest all the time I was there. They didn't kill him. Other people fled the country who were considered competent people, so you lose resources in coups d'état in one way or another.

Now I am remembering my Heifer Project days. We made a shipment to an AID program there which

included some sheep to Egypt. Now we are talking about politics. The sheep developed something called Rhinitis. It is like a cold and your nose runs. Well, the Egyptian veterinarians who were responsible for approving the animals for importation were from a Scottish University. That is all right; there is nothing wrong with that. The veterinarians were considered to be of a leftist tilt at that time. So, they said, "These are diseased sheep and they should be killed. We will kill them right now," so they shot them right there in the airport. They never tried to treat them. There is an example of political impact on a project. Then there was another Arab objection to things that came from the US; they might do some good.

Then the acceptance of force. Here you have a problem. In Ghana, Flight Lt. Rawlins used force to take control of the government. When you have that, well once again you throw out the current government leadership, whatever that may be. Now you see here in the USA, you have an example of where we changed government by election. We didn't shoot anybody. We might have changed their vocation or location. We didn't kill anybody or use any physical violence. We did not lose completely our human resources.

Then you have the business of project goal differences. The example here that I would cite is between the host country and the donor country. Now the donor country might be the USA. I remember a project that was supposed to be started in one of the Caribbean countries in poultry production. Their market, as the plan was, was the Southern USA. That is where these chickens and eggs were supposed to go. Well, this ran into problems here in the United States because the southern poultry men said this is competition. The project would have been acceptable if they had shipped to Brazil.

Then, the U.S. Congress and the people. I think that here you have an interesting perception difference or assumed perception where the Congress says nobody's involved, interested in foreign aid or foreign assistance. Yet the history since WWII has been incredible.

The American people have contributed generously, significantly, and personally, directly to programs to help people in need. It will be interesting for us to see what happens down here in Honduras with that incredible loss there and what will happen with the passage of time as Americans begin to identify the problems. So people are interested in helping other people. There is no question about it. We have so many examples, volunteerism is part of that. Also, to give part of the wealth that you have. So, Congress uses a perception to benefit their own reasons that may be affected by special interests. So, there you have a situation which affects either the size of the program or the direction.

Now, some of the requirements I think are necessary for the change. Number one, you have to have a presence of change agents so we are back to the AID/LAO program where these rural development men in the countryside were. They had to be available, and they had to be there when the people were ready to act. You just can't go out to a village and come back a year later.

Then, related to this is an adequate amount of technician time in the project and on the site. You may remember the early days of AID it was a two year tour and then transfer. That was undesirable. It should have been automatically three years and with a chance for continuation. Just for quick review, it takes a person at least a year to learn. I don't care whether he is here, there, or anywhere. So then

you have that problem of getting acquainted, developing relationships, developing a program and then trying to institute it which requires the procurement process. Then how long is that going to take? Usually into the second year. We have got three or four months left to go. Here come the procurement items, and then the man transfers. A new man comes in. That was one of the problems with the early days.

Q: There was too rapid a turnover. How long do you think a person should serve?

ZIGLER: I think the automatic tour should be three years right off the bat with an option to go for a second tour, which would reduce personnel change at the missions. Particularly if you have a project where you need several cycles that relates to livestock or crops, for instance. I also mentioned this before that in the early days starting with the Marshall Plan, there was no overseas expertise. Then you have to have a condition called peace. How do you maintain peace? Then you can go back to a republic and remember how idealistic and maybe unrealistic we were when we thought that all you have to do is get rid of the potentate and then you'll have a democracy. So we got Nkrumah, who was the first example of what happens, and that's unfortunate. Then you also have a dictatorship concept. Ataturk said that on such and such a day "You will take off the fez and remove the veil. You will march on into the future." That was an administrative decision. You didn't have any vote in Congress. So from one point of view, any criticism of any government needs to be considered as it affects progress and foreign investment and continuity.

Then, of course, we are talking about requirements for change. These are certainly temporal, natural conditions: adequate rain, adequate temperature, soil fertility, or too much rain as we had in Honduras.

One of the planning assumptions was that there would be normal weather, so you can have a predictable future. Then procurement is needed. We have two aspects to deal with. Number one is sources of supply, and so AID has swung back and forth. I can remember one point of view is to buy the closest and the cheapest. An example would be to buy Japanese in Tokyo instead of American in Cleveland. That would be closer, quicker, and cheaper. Then the political problem of American industry and support for foreign assistance. It's important, no question about it.

Moving on to another thing about the determination on the part of a government, in this instance the United States, as to what and how it is to function as a world leader. Assuming you want to be a world leader, then you have to do something. You don't retreat and sit back and build fences. You get out and do something. Now we did in war, that was involvement. We should also do it in peace.

Then if you are going to do something, you have to be where the crisis is or will be. So I'll pick up on that one and this has to do with the Truman Point 4. Do you know how the Truman Point 4 program got its name? It is my understanding that Truman's inaugural speech was written for him by speech writers. He looked at the draft and he said, "We only have three points. We have got to have more than that to talk about." So they thought of one and they put down a point four. So as he makes his speech and he states Point Four, we will share with the world our economical and technical capabilities. Of course, that rang right around the world. That was a beginning and that is where

Point Four came from. Do you agree?

Q: Yes.

ZIGLER: Anyway, then I think we also had the business of Presidential influence, and that changes. To me right now, my observation is that, of course you had then President Roosevelt as kind of a precedent, then you move on to action. You had Truman with his Truman doctrine which was action in the world. Eisenhower, regardless of what you say about him, he was a farmer; he believed in taking care of people. It is true he had a questionable AID influence, but at least he didn't kill it. Then you had Kennedy. These are men that had an inspirational quality that could influence the nation as well as the government itself. I don't think we have them now when it comes down to government. In Congress the names I remember are Senator Flanders who came out of Vermont, a Republican of all things who was in favor of foreign aid. Then Humphrey out of Minneapolis, Minnesota, a Democrat. Walter Judd, the Democrat from Minnesota was interested in the Taiwan Chinese situation.

I can remember in the 50's, the late 40's the involvement on principle of different elements of the American society that are less involved now. I remember organized labor gave support. Industry put together a consortium that went to India and created a steel industry. On the religious side, I can remember the Protestants and Catholics and the Jews, just out of principle, would stand up and argue for AID. It was just as simple as that. Then, the universities, particularly the state schools, had their interest in agriculture and student exchange. They were all involved so you had quite a constituency of support for AID which I don't think exists so much anymore.

Let me move on to another aspect of development which some people would call corruption in terms of project development and project completion. In most foreign countries you have underpaid government workers, so their temptation to get a little extra is understandable. Some people used to call it selective taxation. If you wanted a passport, you paid your bribe to the passport division. If you wanted something else, you did it that way. Is that unreasonable? It is hard to know. Certainly that is a factor that influences behavior.

Now I remember, I was talking to an Italian man involved in building factories all over the world. He was there just completing a contract with the Mauritanian government. So I asked him can you get a contract these days without advancing money to somebody to influence their decision making? He laughed at me as if I were a fool. In the bidding, add a little extra money, that's no problem. We add it to the total budget for the project. I think his was a World Bank funded project at the time. He said, "That isn't the problem, money." I said, "What is the problem?" He said, "Knowing whom to give it to." Just imagine walking into any government office and saying "I've got $10,000. Who is willing to represent me?" Everybody would have their hand up. That is a reality in development.

Then, of course, there were times when you had a change of government from colonial to a republic. That means a lot of money got misused. As you know when you have change, you have opportunities that arise similar to the current Russian situation.

Now back to AID program policies. Well, you mentioned the "New Directions," to help the poorest

of the poor. Now some would argue that the poorest of the poor are the poorest people to try to do any development with. They are the least educated; they are the least whatever it is in any category. That's why they are, unfortunately for them, the poorest of the poor. American county agents, in the old days, when they wanted to introduce a new crop went to the best farmer in the county who would plant a trial plot, because he could afford to lose. But, if you go to one of the poorest of the farmers and he fails, his loss was more consequential. His percentage of loss is greater, so you go to the farmer who has a better chance of success.

Q: Between the poor majority and the poorest of the poor, which made the most sense in terms of AID strategy?

ZIGLER: That the concept gets established is basic and essential. You could walk away; it is there. It will continue. Therefore, I would argue the poor majority is the group that can change with less risk. Then talking about development worldwide by different institutions. Now we are concerned about infrastructure, roads, bridges, dams, electrical generation. You may remember at one time AID decided not to do that, and the World Bank and others were supposed to. Well, once again you have got to identify your location and site and source and if you want to achieve something you should do what is necessary. That is a generalization.

Now Ghana right now, I heard this report form a man who lives there. He said, "Just within the last two or three years the Ghanaian government has brought an electrical distribution system up to Techiman. Things have changed." In other words, you have improvement. But, it had to do with the impact of infrastructure vis a vis electrical generation. Roads are the same way and so forth.

What are some evidences of success? Well, I look to see what has happened. I have some AID ones. First, Ecuador. This was a great one because it was a combination of U.S. Heifer Project voluntary assistance in cooperation with the government of Ecuador and AID. In Quenca, where they made the Panama hats that went up to Panama to be worn by the canal workers there. Then with the arrival of plastic hats after WWII, the Quenca hat business went to pot. (Now this has been revived because it is a prestigious status hat now.) But they lost their source of foreign exchange or income, so Heifer Project sent down baby chicks. Each family would get 15 of them. Half of them would be male and half of them would be female. When they grew up, some of their roosters would be transferred to somebody else and some of the hens. You remember the passing on the gift idea. Then they would start to grow eggs for sale to Quito. They had broilers. They went down to Guayaquil. You could actually go to Quenca at one time and see trucks going to Guayaquil. You could see farmers raising corn; you could see feed mills grinding feed. You could see the chickens running around, red chickens, which were obviously foreign chickens, New Hampshire or Rhode Islands. So we had an easily identifiable successful project. Just last week I talked to a man who was born and raised in Quenca. I asked, "Did you ever see any red chickens down there?" He said, "Oh, yes, there are a lot of red chickens."

Anyway I was talking about these New Hampshire red chickens. One of the first shipments that AID made, with HPI was to Egypt. This was in 1951, 30,000 baby chicks. Again they were New Hampshires and Rhode Islands because they were red feathered. The typical Egyptian chicken at that

time had either white grey or speckled. So AID wanted to introduce a chicken that was obviously different and laid brown eggs. I came by there a number of years later, and I saw red chickens in the villages. Whether or not they are there today is irrelevant, but anyway we are talking about visual evidence.

In Laos, AID built a university there for teacher training. Now once again, buildings lose donor identity just like that training school in Quadaso, Ghana or the Museum of Science and Technology in Kumasi. You have a problem of identification and awareness when it comes to anything that is physical. No question about it, it makes it difficult.

Now another citation would be the English language school there in Ouagadougou, Upper Volta. It is still going. AID and USIS put some money in, but it is now nearly self-sufficient. It is a living project that was started before I left in 1985 and now is 14 years old. That is a good life expectancy. When you are looking for visual evidence, it is tricky to find reportable donor affiliation as years pass by.

I would say that if you believe in what you are doing, you do it and hope that things will work out.

Q: Well that relates to one of my general questions: do you think foreign assistance made a difference?

ZIGLER: Okay, absolutely. As you remember the early evidences or countries that were supposed to be evidence of US assistance were Greece, Turkey, and Taiwan. Look at Taiwan today, and even Turkey and Greece, not too bad. Then you can move on to Korea. It is true they have bad financial situations, but look at them, so those I would say are four quick examples. Brazil, we were in Brazil at one time, so I think that was for the benefit of the world.

Now we are talking about whose values. What would people like to have, usually a house and food and clothing and an education for the children which usually requires an adequate level of income. Those are generalizations for the world. I don't know anybody who doesn't have them.

Q: Well, the other question is how would you assess AID as an international development agency?

ZIGLER: I think in several ways it was obviously a leader partly because in the early days it was willing to innovate and take chances. I think in the early days a lot of projects were started by these unknowing, well-intentioned technicians that were sent out in the early 50's before the experienced others came on site. They would start a green pea project to find out that it shouldn't be peas but green beans. They had to do green peas to find out that it should be beans. so they were innovative and they had enough money and a leadership that was willing to take a chance and suffer the slings and arrows of critics you might say.

From that point of view, I don't know anybody except maybe the Israelis, that have done innovative research in development, the equivalent in a way to this country. Of course this country when it comes to agriculture had the land grant colleges, an incredible resource. Also we are now back to the

importance of printed reports. At one time, these are approximate now, I don't know exactly the figures but they were in the *Time Magazine* something like 83% of all scientific reports were printed in the English language. This includes Australia, India, Great Britain, the United States, Canada. Then something like 30% were printed in Russian. This was back in the significant Russian days. Then 17% in French. So a French scientist in Lyon had a better chance of reading what his buddy did up in Rennes, for example, in an American publication than he did in a French one. So here we had a resource which was a vital. (Also, AID had a group of people, willing to leave a normal career, and venture into new careers and life.)

Q: Well, finally how would you size up your career with foreign assistance?

ZIGLER: I want to stay in the philosophical stream, jump in the current, and float down as long as I am not violating my principles which follow the Judeo-Christian ethic. I'll say this, I tried. Yet at the same time I'm not too enthusiastic about success because it is hard for me to identify success. I admit that I tried as well as I could. So there you go.

Q: Would you recommend it to young men or women who are deciding whether or not to get in this international business?

ZIGLER: Sure. Absolutely. Particularly if that is what they want to do. Now I wouldn't argue it for anybody who came in just because somebody persuaded them.

Q: What is the key of their being effective?

ZIGLER: Many years ago there was a study done on what makes a successful AID employee and what are the clues for selection. The studies that I heard came out with only one thing, “wants to do it.” So what makes someone want to do it? I would presume it has to do with the nature of early life up through college, some influences at the college level. For example there are college professors who influenced me positively. I think it is easier for kids now to have a world knowledge in terms of world needs than you did or I did. I was in far off Illinois, and what did I know about the world? I didn't understand the newspapers half the time as far as headlines were concerned. So it comes from some kind of inspiration.

Q: It sounds like you have come full circle from where you started, a good place to wind up. This has been an excellent interview; thank you for participating in the program.

ZIGLER: Okay, I was glad to do it.